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A  
COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE

FRENCH AND ENGLISH

N A T I O N S,

IN THEIR

MANNERS, POLITICS,

AND

L I T E R A T U R E.

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By JOHN ANDREWS, LL. D.

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L O N D O N,

Printed for T. LONGMAN, and G. G. J. and J. ROBINSON, in  
Pater-noster-Row.

MDCCLXXXV.

1785



COMPARATIVE VIEW

OF THE

BRITISH



BY JOHN ARTHUR, M.D.

LONDON

Printed by J. G. & J. H. Smith, 10, Abchurch Lane, E.C. 4.

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A COM.

# E R R A T A.

The Author being at such a distance as not to be able to superintend the Press, has made it necessary that the Reader should mark the following errors and corrections.

- P. 26 l. 1. *for composing, read lampooning.*  
 38 2. *for this city, read a city.*  
 41 23. *for as far, read is far.*  
 45 12. *dele and that.*  
 50 13. *for is, read are.*  
 15. *dele yet.*  
 59 11. *dele which.*  
 68 10. *for walk, read walks.*  
 70 20. *for farthering, read furthering.*  
 71 23. *for advantage, read advantages.*  
 72 23. *for of, read concerning.*  
 81 4. *for is very, read is certainly very.*  
 98 13. *for almost all, read such.*  
 111 11. *for intitled, read intitle.*  
 114 5. *for to officers, &c. read This order was instituted, to serve as a recompense to officers who had distinguished themselves, in default of more solid and substantial rewards. Though generally, &c.*  
 115 5. *for were, read are.*  
 123 3. *for execration, read experience.*  
 128 11. *dele other.*  
 14. *for to his, read for his.*  
 130 15. *for ideas prevalent, read ideas so prevalent.*  
 131 19. *for where it is, read where birth is.*  
 141 6. *for receives, read he receives.*  
 145 13. *dele of false breeding.*  
 154 1. *dele before this time.*  
 164 14. *for must endeavour, read they must endeavour.*  
 175 14. *after the words learned body, read, it has produced men of the greatest abilities in every province of science and literature.*  
 179 23. *dele the worst.*  
 182 9. *dele not only.*  
 11. *for but even, read and.*  
 190 21. *for Galileo, read Galilei.*  
 203 18. *for it is allowed, r. handsomeness is allowed.*  
 213 17. *for same confidence, read the same confidence.*

- P. 228 l. 11. *for* much circumscribed, *read* much more circumscribed.
- 238 12. *after* the word *English*, *read* in virtues and talents of a more exalted nature.
- 252 6. *dele* many.
- 255 15. *for* renovation of them, *read* renovation of themselves.
- 258 3. *for* people, *read* the divers people.
- 263 23. *for* our revenge, *read* their revenge.
- 274 1. *for* condition, *read* conditions.
- 274 8. *for* but however, *read* but if however.
- 277 19. *for* third estate, *read* people.
- 278 7. *for* than, *read* but.
- 297 7. *dele* have.
- 318 9. *for* rather in, *read* rather than in.
- 320 6. *for* mark, *read* instance.
- 325 12. *for* they, *read* these.
- 349 5. *for* much impatience, *read* much more impatience.
- 351 15. *dele* too much.
- 390 20. *for* they, *read* these.
- 394 17. *for* they, *read* these.
- 404 19. *for* exalt, *read* maintain.
- 405 1. *dele* other.
- 409 18. *for* concurrence in, *read* concurrence of opinion in.
- 412 8. *for* that far surpasses, *read* far surpassing.
- 414 22. *for* the best, *read* that the best.
- 417 1. *for* at, *read* to.
- 417 18. *for* are, *read* were.
- 422 3. *dele* parts.
- 430 18. *for* it precluded, *read* as it precluded.
- 431 19. *for* considered the, *read* considered as the.
- 435 12. *dele* in this particular.
- 437 6. *for* spirit, *read* enjoyment.
- 437 24. *for* of Charles, *read* of our Charles.
- 449 7. *for* Dominions, *read* Dominion.
- 450 7. *dele* the
- 463 24. *for* department, *read* departments.
- 475 3. *for* most, *read* must.

N. B. Errors in the Spelling and Punctuation, are left to the Correction of the Reader.

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A

**COMPARATIVE VIEW**  
OF THE  
**FRENCH** and **ENGLISH** Nations  
IN THEIR  
**MANNERS, POLITICS, AND LITERATURE.**

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**INTRODUCTION.**

**P**REVIOUS to this Comparative View, it will be necessary to examine the progress of literature, and of other improvements among the French, and the changes thereby effected in their disposition and manners.

The French literati distinguish three remarkable epochas in their history. The first commences with the opening of the

B                      sixteenth



## 2 INTRODUCTION.

sixteenth century, after the revival of classical learning, and the polite arts in Italy; from thence they were brought into France under the protection and encouragement of Francis the First, cotemporary with our Henry the Eighth, a prince whose temper sympathized, in many respects, with that of the French monarch; in emulation of whom, probably, he not only patronized letters, but cultivated them himself. This æra of Francis the First they called *le siecle des savans*, the age of learning.

The second epocha is marked by the splendid reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, and is esteemed in France, *le siecle du genie*, the age of genius.

The third, which is the present, they have thought proper to style *le siecle du gout*, the age of taste.

A king whose whole life was taken up with so much political and military business as that of Francis, could not be supposed to bring matters to any settled degree

## INTRODUCTION. 3

gree of perfection ; and yet, so sedulous were his endeavours to introduce the Muses into his kingdom, that he had the satisfaction of seeing an application to the study of ancient authors firmly rooted among his subjects ; many of whom became, in his time, noted for their profound skill in Greek and Roman literature. This, with school-divinity, and the Aristotelian philosophy, together with those ecclesiastical writers styled the fathers, were the only branches of knowledge then in vogue.

This æra, therefore, was fertile in editors and commentators. Latin was the language employed by the French as well as the literati throughout all Europe, during that period, with very few exceptions.

Few, indeed, of those in France who attempted to write in their own, obtained any lasting credit by it. Their poets, especially, were the least happy of any in this respect ; as may be exemplified in

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Ronfard and Dubartas, who, though men of wit, science, and genius, wrote in a pedantic affected style, that soon became obsolete and antiquated.

Neither, indeed, have Beze and Marot, who translated the Psalms into French metre, met with a success equal to that of Sternhold and Hopkins, who performed the same task much about the same time, and some of whose versions please even at this day. The poetical works of several other of our countrymen in that age are still relished. This is far from being the case of any French poet then existing, if we except a few epigrams of the above cited Marot, tolerable enough for what the French call *naïveté*, agreeable simplicity.

This, likewise, is the principal merit of most of their works in prose, that made their appearance in those times; of the Queen of Navarre's Tales, for instance, and divers other productions of that sort wherein France abounded.

Charron

## INTRODUCTION: 5

Charron is more noted for his profound sense, and the satire *Menippée* for its wit, and both for strength and vigour, than for gracefulness of style.

In this latter Montaigne is far their superior, as well as in that facetiousness which characterises his manner of writing, and that lively expressive turn he has the talent of conferring upon thoughts that often have nothing else to recommend them.

The singularity of genius that distinguishes Rabelais from all writers, will perpetuate his fame much more than the merit of his diction; which, though strong and energetic, is the very reverse of polished and flowing. His chief praise, is that of being the strangest of all originals the world ever produced.

There are no others deserving of particular consideration, except Brantome; in whom is found an elegance and ease unknown to his contemporaries, and which have yet many admirers.



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This period, however, gave birth to the noblest historic genius that ever appeared in France, the illustrious De Thou, much better known by his Latin name Thuanus. But though he wrote in that language the History of his own Times in a style not unworthy of the Augustan age, yet the French productions of his pen seem to countenance the opinion, that the talents of some individuals require a peculiar language, as well as a peculiar subject, in order to be exerted with success.

It was a great length of time before any historical performance of considerable merit was written originally in French. The only one deserving of notice and mention, is the History of Rome by Coeffeteau, who flourished a few years after Thuanus.

Vaugelas and Ablancourt were the first French writers that displayed a perfect taste of correctness and elegance in their narrations: but even they were mere translators; and though very illustrious in  
that

## INTRODUCTION. 7

that line of literature, can only be said to have given their countrymen beautiful versions of the Greek and Roman authors.

During this first period, as the minds of the French fully partook of the agitation and tempestuousness of the times, their manners still retained a great share of their former rudeness; and the civil wars, on account of religion interfering, added a fatal measure of fierceness and cruelty.

Their genteelst diversions, which were tilts and tournaments, were still conducted according to the ancient spirit of chivalry, and differed not much, in point of danger, from real combats.

In the mean while their intestine divisions were attended with every circumstance that could render them truly terrible. Their battles were fought with such inexorable fury, that the *vae victis*, woe to the conquered, of Brennus, never could be more applicable than to those that lost the day. The most horrid severities were

B 4

exercised

## 8 INTRODUCTION.

exercised on both sides. It is impossible to read without shuddering, the barbarous exploits of their chieftains ; such men, for instance, as the baron Des Adrets, whose conduct and actions remind one of an American savage, in the perpetration of his barbarities, much more than of an European militant.

But the whole system of their politics was alike, *dolus an virtus*, force or fraud were equally welcome ; the massacre of the Protestants and the assassinations of the Guises, and of the two Henries, were all of a-piece.

Such was, for more than half a century, the general turn of the French : nothing liberal and generous in their public transactions ; where dissimulation was accounted the pinnacle of policy : while in private life, a propensity to dissensions and quarrels prevailed, joined with a restless thirst and prosecution of revenge, that eternised enmity and rendered foes irreconcilable.

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After the troubles during the minority of Lewis the Thirteenth were subsided, and the government was assumed by cardinal Richelieu, this equally crafty and resolute minister foresaw, that unless the attention of the people was converted to more agreeable scenes than they had been used to so many years, his post would remain like that of a Turkish visir, precarious and full of danger.

In order, therefore, to divert the storm he had sufficient grounds to be apprehensive would gather on all sides, he set himself to work a change in the minds of the French nobility, by inducing them to a closer cultivation of the belles lettres than had hitherto been fashionable : thereby to soften their dispositions, and eradicate that proneness to public and private broils, which rendered the management of them so very difficult a task.

The more readily to effect this purpose, he gave the highest encouragement to that kind of literature which naturally promotes



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promotes politeness and festivity of intercourse; such as poetry, romance, and dramatic compositions. Whether from the political view of setting a respectable example to the higher classes, or the vanity of appearing excellent in every thing (which was his capital foible), he sometimes undertook the personage of author, wherein he was rather unfortunate.

There is a tradition in France, that, not to be thought unequal to the attempt, he offered the celebrated Corneille a large pecuniary gratification for the right of authorship to his first tragedy *le Cid*. But this illustrious poet, whose appetite for fame was greater than for money, rejected the proposal with an indignation which had like to have cost him dear. The cardinal, actuated by his native spirit of revenge, left no expedient untried to ruin him in the opinion of his audience. He compelled the French academy (just founded by his means and patronage, and whose members were all his creatures, or at his devotion)

## INTRODUCTION. II

devotion) to pass the most unmerciful judgment on that play in a criticism yet extant.

His malevolence, however, was exerted in vain. Notwithstanding his credit and influence, the public was not to be deterred from doing justice to that exquisite performance ; which was received with the admiration and applause so fully due to the best tragedy that had yet appeared on the French theatre.

In other instances his munificence to men of literary abilities was truly noble. He may be justly styled the real founder of taste and genius in France ; which in his time, and through his endeavours, saw the dawn of all those improvements that did so much honour to the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth.

But still a tincture of their ancient ferocity characterised his countrymen ; whose restless temper was ever breaking forth on the least excitation. Not, indeed, in those heroic struggles against tyranny ;  
and

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and in favour of that national freedom and felicity which were the objects of our ancestors, at that time, but in pitiful wranglings for the private interest of some turbulent grandees, whose pride and arrogance that indefatigable minister had to deal with to his latter hour.

Nothing more clearly proves the difference between the English and French nations, than the commotions that disturbed France under his administration; a difference that is manifested by every essential point of consideration.

Ever since the disuse, or rather the suppression of the states general in France (exactly corresponding with our Parliaments in England), no other spirit but that of selfishness, animated the leaders of the many factions that arose, like hydras, the one from the extinction of another. It seemed as if the dissolution of those national assemblies had annihilated all regard for the public good. This was so utterly condemned to oblivion

## INTRODUCTION. 13

vion among the great, that they did not even think it necessary to cloke their proceedings with such a pretence, as nothing of that nature ever entered into their views, neither did it make any part of the motives or expectations even of those who espoused their cause; so completely universal was the degeneracy of the whole nation.

The nobility, clergy, and *tiers état* (commons), had, in a manner, shaken hands together for the last time, in the famous convention held a little after the death of Henry the Fourth; wherein the haughtiness of the great nobles and churchmen so far blinded them to their real welfare, that every step which chicanery can suggest, was taken to quarrel with, depress, and vilify the *tiers état*.

But these might have stood their ground, had there not unfortunately been among them many devoted to the court; whose instruments, in all such assemblies, are ever the most active, as they have the  
sure



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future prospect of an immediate reward. They who maintain the rights of the public are more luke-warm, from the nature of their recompence, which is remote and participated in common with the meanest of their fellow-subjects; while the danger they risk is levelled at, and falls on them alone.

Hence it happened that finding themselves deserted by the nobility and upper clergy, and by no small a proportion of their own body, the French commons grew dispirited, and tamely retreated from the scene of action; leaving the clergy and great men in possession of the state, which they soon embroiled: the first, by raising religious persecutions; the others, by embracing every opportunity of fomenting those divisions from whence they hoped to derive any personal benefit. In the mean time, as Sallust says of the consequences of the intestine feuds among the leading men at Rome, *respublica quæ media*

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*dia fuerat dilacerata*, the state itself was torn in pieces between them.

Thus France was, during a long space, rent into parties, not one of which had the least plausible pretext for its existence.

In the midst of such turmoils, well might the inferior ranks lose that regard for the common-weal, which they saw their superiors had so little at heart. Well might they, after the example of the Romans in the decline of their republic, attach themselves solely to the heads of the several factions, as they were the only objects in whose prosperity their own seemed included.

Hence that facility with which plots were formed; that eagerness with which they were conducted; and that precipitancy with which they were brought to a crisis; year after year renewing the old, or producing fresh conspiracies; the destruction of the last often serving, from the pertinacity of the times, to lay the foundation of another.

Such

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Such was the situation of France under what may not improperly be termed the reign of Richelieu. He had, however, at his decease, the satisfaction of seeing this rebellious spirit, in a great measure, subdued; and of transmitting the reins of government into the hands of a successor every way qualified to finish what he had himself so successfully begun and so nearly completed.

In consequence of the maxims laid down by his predecessor, the new minister lost no opportunity of extirpating the root of all these mischiefs, by discountenancing and suppressing, by every art and method, that fierceness and violence of temper and disposition which were their principal cause and support.

To compass this end, so necessary to the purposes he had in view, he laid himself out to diffuse, as far as he was able, a gentleness of manners, and a smoother style of behaviour than had hitherto been prevalent: with his friends and dependants

## INTRODUCTION. 17

dants he assumed an ease and complaisance that were indeed the best ingredients in his character, and contributed not a little to establish his good fortune : and he acted on all occasions with an air of affability that not only won him the good wishes, but imperceptibly the imitation of many; from that almost irresistible impulse which induces mankind to copy those who please them.

This was precisely what he intended by the extraordinary condescension he displayed indiscriminately with all people. It produced, in a little time, those effects he had not unreasonably promised himself, and wrought a change among the French that paved a ready way to his designs.

Bluntness of speech and deportment was gradually banished from genteel society ; and a more soft and refined mode of address was substituted in its room. The word Court became more dignified in signification and importance than ever; it meant not only the seat of sovereignty

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and



## 18 INTRODUCTION.

and power, but the center of all refined merit; and an *Homme de Cour* was the most flattering epithet an individual could be complimented with.

The minister who accomplished all this, with so much dexterity, was cardinal Mazarin; a man the reverse in all things of Richelieu; but who was admirably indued with the talent of accommodating himself to all characters, and of temporizing in those emergencies where patience and dissimulation are of more efficacy than open force.

These were the qualities Richelieu foresaw would prove the most useful in the times that were to follow. On the strength of these he pitched upon Mazarin to succeed him, as one who had firmness enough to adhere steadily to the plan he had formed, and yet had sufficient sagacity to enforce it only by such means as were practicable.

Mazarin answered exactly all these ideas, and amply justified the choice that

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was made of him; a choice that fully shewed the foresight and penetration of its author.

As Mazarin was a foreigner, unconnected with any of the great families in the kingdom, he clearly perceived that insinuation and flattery were the chief weapons to be employed in making his way to the station he aimed at, that of governing France under the name of an Infant King, and the regency of a Queen Dowager, who was not a little jealous of her authority.

Happily for him, being a stranger like himself, and not over confident in any of the natives, she was the less averse to accept the assistance of a person who was entirely to depend upon her good-will and countenance, for the enjoyment of a post that exposed him to so much envy, and raised him so many rivals. He was soon convinced, by the most dangerous proofs, of the implacable resentment and indignation which his preferment excited in men,

who had every motive to be discontented at so extraordinary and unmerited an exaltation of a mere foreigner, in preference to so many individuals, no less conspicuous for their birth than for their abilities.

No two persons were ever more perfectly calculated for joint co-operators in the enterprizes they took in hand than the Queen and the Cardinal. As they both possessed a winning, graceful deportment, and an engaging propriety of conduct with all who approached them, they soon gained a numerous party of well-wishers, and settled their power on such a foundation, that all the subsequent troubles were not able to overturn it: though Mazarin was obliged for a while to withdraw, yet it was only to enable her to recall and reinstate him on a more lasting and firmer footing than ever.

This period afforded the latter scene of expiring freedom and patriotism, which having lain dormant since the dissolution of  
of

## INTRODUCTION. 21

of the states, already mentioned, awoke, for the last time, in those meetings which the French call Parliaments, but which are no more than their courts of judicature, and therefore composed of none but lawyers and gownsmen.

As the decrees of the king's council are registered in these courts, it gave them a pretence, not altogether groundless, to inspect into the tenour and purport of what was transferred into their hands, to be ratified by their approbation, and receive from their concurrence the sanction of laws. Though, strictly speaking, the constitution allows them no share in the legislative power, and considers them only as executors of the laws, yet, as that constitution was now in a great measure subverted, the judicious part of the French nation saw no impropriety in their assuming a right, of which the court had unjustly deprived all other subjects, that of representing the true state of public affairs, laying grievances before the throne,



22 INTRODUCTION.

and resisting the pernicious influence of undeserving favourites, and the iniquitous designs of wicked ministers.

This right, as no other corporate and legal body of men remained to claim it, became, in the apprehension of all sensible, impartial people, much less the privilege than the duty of these parliaments to challenge and exercise.

In conformity to an opinion supported by a majority of the nation, it was exerted in a manner that reflected no disgrace on the members of those assemblies; notwithstanding the pains taken by venal, pusillanimous, or prejudiced writers to defame or misrepresent them, or to deny the justice and praise due to their merits.

But as the maxims of slavish obedience had taken a deep root, and were strongly abetted and inculcated by almost all the ecclesiastics in the realm, the opposition to tyranny was not carried on with that concurrent unanimity which had been expected by those who had led the way.

Neither

## INTRODUCTION. 23

Neither did they act with that deliberate intrepidity of measures, which alone can save a people in those desperate extremities that force them to have recourse to the sword.

They seemed to have forgotten that, when it is drawn, the scabbard should be fairly thrown away, and nothing of timidity or wavering admitted in the councils of men embarked in such a cause.

Uncertainty, tumult, and apprehension, soon took possession of the French parliament; which, consisting of gentlemen of the long robe, could not produce those active champions for the common cause, whose personal courage and vigour are so absolutely necessary in critical, decisive moments.

They who assumed the executive part were mostly persons unacquainted with military affairs; and who, therefore, could not, with raw undisciplined citizens, make head against regulars led on by expert officers.

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The result was the total defeat of all those intentions which the friends to liberty had been forming ; and the complete establishment of the royal power on the ruins of every lawful barrier to oppression.

As this great victory was obtained by the court through the assistance of the military and the clergy, they reaped, of course, the principal benefit from this change in the political system, and have ever since been held in high repute by the government.

Notwithstanding the ill success that befel the popular party, the celebrated cardinal de Rets, its principal head, and the profest inveterate antagonist of Mazarin, was incomparably the greater genius of the two.

This undaunted soul of so many factions, excited and kept alive through his instigations and spirit, was unquestionably a most extraordinary man : had he been less actuated by impetuosity, and  
more

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more governed by real patriotism, he would probably have proved more serviceable to his cause. But as he carried all things to excess, and was evidently more ingrossed by his own views than was consistent in one who pretended to be zealous for the public good, his credit gradually declined, and became at last of no consideration.

The truth was, that neither he, nor many of his party, were animated by that enthusiastic ardour for liberty which inspires those who have been educated under a free government, and is seldom, indeed, felt by such as have been brought up in the submissive notions encouraged in absolute monarchies. It was rather a hatred of those in power, and excepting the most eminent persons in parliament, few even of those who espoused their quarrels, had a proper idea of the ends for which they had taken up arms: while the generality seemed to be much more delighted and occupied in turning to ridicule the  
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most serious transactions, and composing their chiefs merely for the sake of diversion.

Thus the civil war itself became at length a subject of derision, and is at this time spoken of in France as a strange, wild fit of infatuation, that, as the author of Hudibras says, "Made men fall out they knew not why."

During these contests at home, and until the final conclusion of the long wars the French had been maintaining abroad, though literature and taste were gaining ground; the turbulence of the times was unfavourable to their progress. Mazarin himself, notwithstanding he was a person of finished breeding, neither possessed any remarkable share of, nor in truth, was inclinable to set much value on scholarship, or any accomplishments purely intellectual. The literati, therefore, had little or nothing to boast of his encouragement. That edifice which Richelieu had been at so much pains and cost to raise, was

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was beginning to totter, and the minds of the French, which the cultivation of literature had contributed so essentially to improve and adorn, were in danger of relapsing to their former barbarity, when a new scene was opened, by an entire cessation of all domestic dissensions, and what was still of more importance, the auspicious administration of Colbert.

This truly wise and upright statesman, though he was the subject of a despotic master, had honesty and discretion enough to tread with firmness and security the footsteps of the most consummate patriots.

He was persuaded the dispositions of the French nation were of such a nature, that, provided the regal authority were exercised with moderation, they might be as happy as in those countries where the constitution is free. Impressed with this idea, he zealously used his endeavours to render the king's power as extensively beneficial to all his subjects, as it was unlimited ;

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limited; and to derive the most salutary effects from the good management of that which, when ill employed, is the cause of the greatest evils.

His patriotic efforts succeeded to the utmost of his hopes and expectations; and that part of Lewis the Fourteenth's reign, over which this great minister presided, left his people no reason to regret the loss of a liberty, of which few among them had any right conceptions, and most of them did not wish for.

Henceforward that petulance and restlessness of temper, in regard to public matters, which had so long and so lately been the character of the French noblesse, gave way to an implicit respect and submission to the crown. This alteration, as things were circumstanced, one may assert was fortunate for the whole community. When liberty becomes the privilege of only one part of the nation, it soon degenerates into the most profligate licentiousness, and throws the rest into disorder.

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It is certainly better that a civilised people should pay a regulated obedience to one head, than become the slavish vassals of many, whose independence is the constant source of mischief to all over whom they possess jurisdiction. Witness the feudal governments that formerly disturbed all Europe. Witness the fatal remains of them in Poland: where more slavery prevails than in any other European state.

It was, therefore, a happiness to France, that as the noblesse would not suffer the *tiers état* to enjoy freedom, they should also be deprived of that remnant of which they had made so pernicious a use, by perpetually fomenting dissensions, and setting their country in a flame, for the sake of some paltry personal gratification.

Here, then, begins the second period of improvement in France; which to call the æra of genius, is saying no more than what is due to a people to whom the  
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whole circle of arts and sciences, and of whatever dignifies the intellects of mankind, has the most essential obligations.

As the many illustrious names that graced this memorable period are familiar to people of education, it were needless to enumerate the various branches of knowledge which were then brought to perfection, or improved in a high degree, or the divers arts which were cultivated with the most brilliant success.

But the happiest effect of this great revolution was the influence it had over the minds and inclinations of the people in France, by inspiring them with a profitable emulation, and stimulating them to those prosecutions from whence a rational glory and solid emoluments were equally to accrue.

Thus, from contending in fields of blood, laying waste their own country, and debasing themselves by the most dishonourable subserviency to the lawless ambition of their seditious nobles, they  
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were taught to relish the fruits of peace ; to engage in commerce, and other beneficial pursuits ; and, what was still more desirable, as it tends to perpetuate such a disposition, to look on the strength and stability of government as the surest support of private welfare, as well as of public grandeur.

Guided by these laudable sentiments, they filled every profession, and every department of the state and of the community, with the most able incumbents and proficients. They became serviceable to themselves by their industry, and not less to other nations by their ingenuity, which it behoves mankind gratefully to acknowledge, remained, during the space of many years, the supreme object of universal applause and imitation.

It was thought necessary to enter into this historical detail, in order to account satisfactorily for the pacific temper and frame of mind the French still adhere to, with so much constancy, that is to say,  
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their passiveness and unreluctance in complying with all the dictates of government. This is a character from which, as observed, they once were widely removed; and which could never, probably, have taken place, but from the very cogent causes above mentioned, that gave so effectually a new turn to that people, and from the most contentless, turbulent, and factious, have rendered them the most pliable and easy to rule of any throughout all Europe.

The bickerings that of late years have arisen between the court and parliament do not seem to portend any other material alterations in their internal politics, than what may effect a diminution of the clergy's power, and a better regulation of that body, by retrenching some of its unnecessary branches, and curtailing it of sundry of those privileges that experience has demonstrated to be detrimental to the community. Whence we may infer that as their constitution will probably subsist  
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On the same footing it is now, the dispositions of the people will also continue as they are at present: the latter being, in all countries, a natural consequence of the former.

We may date the conclusion of this age of genius with the demise of its protector, Lewis the Fourteenth; after whose time, a studious refinement in those arts and improvements his patronage had so powerfully countenanced, became the reigning passion.

As grandeur and elegance could not be carried farther, the utmost efforts of ingenuity were exerted, and every faculty of invention strained, to introduce a boundless variety into the manifold productions which genius and capacity had already brought forth.

Hence arose a minute examination of every subject wherein fancy could strike out new forms, where the appearance of things could not assume an air of absolute novelty; no attention was, however,

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spared to throw in that difference which is communicated through the channel of taste ; a word that became the motto of the times, and was appropriated to those embellishments that happened to meet with approbation.

This lucky term was unanimously adopted by all who laboured to signalize themselves in those departments where brilliancy was chiefly sought, and a striking disposition of ornaments, was the object principally consulted.

Poets, orators, and even historians, became solicitous to versify, speak, and write, according to what was called the standard of purity and taste ; and palaces, furniture, equipage, and dress, were all regulated by the same test.

An elaborate luxuriance of expression was hunted after in speech and in writing ; and too often was suffered to atone for barrenness of thought. Decorations were lavished wherever the eye could turn its attention ; and an affected profusion of  
splendor

splendor succeeded to that regular magnificence, which had been so much admired by the foregoing age.

Another spirit also arose, but it was the iniquitous spirit of malevolence, envy, and detraction. Not content with that portion of glory which would have accrued from an imitation of those excellent models that illustrated the preceding æra, a party of gloomy, sullen mortals, entered the lists, professedly to defame and discredit them. Unable to recommend themselves by their own merit, they attempted to depreciate the worth, and fully the lustre, of those for whom the public entertained the most reasonable prepossession.

Their endeavours proved, however, ineffectual. Notwithstanding the voluminous attacks of many a Zoilus, the objects at which their spiteful criticisms were levelled, have stood their ground against all the malice of those ill-natured lucubrations. The authors of these infamous attempts, are now almost totally forgotten,

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and consigned over to that obscurity from which it was a pity they ever did, as it is highly probable they never will any more, emerge.

After the extinction of this envious, defamatory spirit, a more equitable and auspicious one appeared, which peculiarly characterizes the present age, and will transmit it to future times as of equal utility with the former. This was the spirit of judgment and criticism, a praise it fully deserves from the many judicious performances it has abounded with. If they do not exhibit those heights of eloquence and expression that so frequently mark the compositions of the last, they certainly excel in a happy fertility of useful truths, conveyed in clear and elegant language.

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COMPARATIVE VIEW  
OF THE  
F R E N C H  
AND  
ENGLISH NATIONS.

C H A P. I.

*On Paris—London—Their Extent—Appearance of their  
Inhabitants.*

**H**AVING given, in the Introduction, such a brief narrative of the French nation, as seemed requisite for the better understanding the ensuing essays on their character and manners, we shall now proceed to observe, that one of the first observations that occurs to an English traveller in France, is, that Paris, its capital,



though immense, does not equal the dimensions of London : this city, that bids fair to attain to the real magnitude of ancient Rome ; which, according to the most accurate accounts and investigations, seems not, when arrived at its farthest growth, to have covered much more ground than the metropolis of England does at present ; although some modern writers, in the enthusiasm of their admiration for all that related to the ancient Romans, have indulged themselves in the most extravagant and fabulous calculations on this subject.

Limits have long since been appointed to the extent of Paris, not improbably according to an advice said to have been given by cardinal Richlieu to his master, Lewis the Thirteenth. That crafty and arbitrary minister, well knew that all large cities were dangerous impediments in the way of tyranny, by the freedom of speech and the communication of sentiments, unavoidable in crowds ; to say no-  
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thing of the use made of the press on such occasions, and the multiplicity of other means of facilitating, with the utmost secrecy and dispatch, both private and public correspondence and information. From these considerations arose, in all probability, the determination to remove every obstacle to the establishment of despotism that might accrue from the size and populousness of the capital. Such a measure might, however, be accounted for, and justified upon the obvious maxim, that militates in all countries against an excessive increase of the metropolis, which ought always to bear a due proportion to the extent and the power of the state.

The largeness of London was already conspicuous in the days of queen Elizabeth. There are several charts extant, published at that time, wherein the number of people it contained was computed at about three hundred thousand.

Influenced, perhaps, by the same motives which actuated Richlieu, that prince

(in whose reign the power vested in the crown, was far superior to what her successors have been allowed) judged it proper to set bounds to its farther augmentation. She might possibly apprehend the increase of a city, the multitude and riches of whose inhabitants might, in process of time, embolden them to assume a greater spirit and independence on the court, than was consistent with the authority she thought herself entitled to maintain.

But the act that was framed to this intent, met with little regard, and was very ill observed; the enlargement of London continuing, without any interruption, during all the following reign.

Charles the First, who attempted to revive and enforce this regulation, begun by issuing an order, prohibiting the resort of the nobility, gentry, and others, to London (except in parliament time), without his special permission. But as people saw clearly through his designs, far from obeying

ing this injunction, they rather came to town in greater crowds than ever.

The general aspect of things in Paris, is gay and flourishing enough, if we descend no lower than the middling of the industrious classes; but such as are beneath that level will not bear much scrutiny; and the condition of what goes by the name of populace, is miserable indeed. And yet, though there is much more misery, in fact, among these than among those of their own degree at London, there is less in appearance, to such as are inattentive to any other indication of it than that of apparel. But whoever examines the countenance of the lowest sort in our English metropolis, and compares their plight of body (divested of that shabbiness and raggedness for which they manifest so shameful and scandalous an unconcern) with the countenance of the vulgar at Paris, will soon perceive the condition of the former as far preferable to that of the latter, in point of food and plentifulness of  
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nourishment; not only the most essential article in life, but that whereof the comfortable enjoyment enables mankind to dispense with almost every other.

The wretchedness of the country people throughout France, forms a lamentable contrast to the semblance of gaiety that is so much affected in the capital; where individuals are dextrous enough in devising expedients to conceal their poverty. But the poor simple rustics are totally unacquainted with these shifts; and their situation is, both in fact and appearance, very piteous and uncomfortable.

They who make so light of the blessings of a free government (as too many are apt to do among us, from what motives it is hard to determine) would do well to pay a serious visit, not to Paris, where the exterior glare of things will dazzle them, but to the provinces of France, where the inhabitants, even of such as are least harrassed and oppressed, are, beneath all comparison, inferior in every consideration

ation of circumstances, to the peasantry of England: a race of mortals far happier than any of their degree, in any other part of the world; and whose peculiar felicity is the first object that awakens the attention of all travellers.

The French themselves (always ready to diminish whatever can contribute to render our country preferable to theirs) cannot help acknowledging this truth, which indeed is too visible for a denial: the generality of foreigners have candour enough to attribute it, among other causes, to the superior excellence of our political constitution.

But this latter is a thing few Frenchmen dare admire in public; though many of them envy us the possession of it in secret. A fact notoriously evident by the incessant complaints one hears of in such companies as think themselves at liberty to vent their discontents. When the French are silent on affairs of state, and the intrigues of the court, it proceeds from  
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the apprehension of a discovery, through those multitudes of spies, commissioned by the lieutenant of the police at Paris, that swarm in coffee-houses, and other places of public resort; much in the same manner as the emissaries of the grand vizir at Constantinople.

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C H A P. II.

*On the courteous Behaviour of the French to People of Education—On the Encouragement of Men of Letters.*

WHAT first prepossesses a stranger in favour of the French, is the affability and friendliness he experiences from those to whom he is properly recommended. If he is a person of ingenuous, liberal sentiments, and, from his situation in life, entitled to frequent genteel society, he must feel particular satisfaction at the unaffected complaisance and

and familiarity of behaviour subsisting between individuals, whose circumstances are widely disproportionate, but whom an intimate sense and conviction of the respect and encouragement that are due to intellectual merit, places on the most agreeable level.

Certain it is, that among the French, more perhaps than any other nation, an equality in point of education, secures reciprocation of good manners between persons very different in degree: and that the great, far from flighting or shunning their inferiors, if men of known abilities, are, on the contrary, remarkably fond of their company and conversation.

In this particular France is the first country in the world; and may be cited as a pattern, which it were to be wished the rest of Europe would copy with as much eagerness as it does many of its customs, no less deserving of contempt than the former is worthy of applause.

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It has often been complained; that notwithstanding the flourishing state of literature in England, men of learning enjoy not the happiness of a free and easy intercourse with the great, unless there is a prospect of turning their abilities to a political use.

This was notoriously exemplified in the conduct of the lords Bolingbroke and Oxford. Each of them was desirous of being viewed in the light of a *Mecænas*; but, though in some respects not undeserving of that title, they had evidently, in their patronage of scholars, a principal eye to the service they promised themselves from their pens, in the political altercations of those troublesome times.

Nothing is clearer than that ministers who are desirous of popularity, should honour and countenance men of letters. Most of those who have neglected them, have had cause to repent it. The celebrated cardinal Mazarin was, for instance, a man who, as he neither had, nor indeed  
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pretended to have, much literature, took little notice of men of wit and genius. But this conduct created him more enemies than he was aware of. He owed, in a great measure, to their hatred and contempt, much of the opposition he met with from all quarters. Notwithstanding he found means to reinstate himself in the posts from whence they had contributed to expel him, and to arrive at such a plenitude of might, in a land where he was a stranger, as spoke him a complete politician (so far as related to his personal aggrandizement); yet he continued almost universally detested in France, during his whole life; and since his death, a period at which enmity usually ceases, and justice is done to a man's memory, no defender of his reputation has yet arose.

In our own times and country, the no less famous sir Robert Walpole, by neglecting men of letters, drew the whole load of their odium upon him. Hence it is, that no mercy hath been shewn to his  
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character; and that he is, according to the representations of the majority of writers, accounted the chief author and modeller of that regular system of corruption which has nearly subverted the constitution.

The uncommon regard paid in France to persons eminent in literature, is no less extraordinary than commendable, when it is considered that neither moral nor intellectual worth are so quickly discovered, or meet with so much notice and esteem in extensive as in smaller states, where individuals are within reach of each other, and more at hand to enquire into the character of all who are above the mere vulgar. In such a state, indeed, it is of peculiar consequence to stand in a personally meritorious light, as merit is not only more visible, but by the credit and deference it procures among all ranks, becomes, in a manner, its own recompence.

The case is far otherwise in large empires; where men are placed at too remote

note a distance for these reciprocal scrutinies; and where, from the prodigious inequality of conditions, effected by the disparity of pecuniary circumstances, they who are stationed on the inferior list, however deserving in other respects, are hardly deemed worthy of any observation. In such a system, therefore, riches are necessarily, through the elevation they confer, almost the sole object of attention; being, in fact, the only means to dazzle and lead the ignorant, unprincipled multitude, insensible to any inducements but such as operate on the grossest perception.

A great nation consists of too many members to be won separately by dint of reason. Their applause and admiration are no otherwise obtained than by superficial splendor, which needs no argument to recommend it to the generality. Hence the aim of those who aspire at power and grandeur is the acquisition of opulence, which alone is fully sufficient to secure them respect and interest. While they

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need no additional qualifications, there is no cause to wonder they should undervalue in others, what they find no reason to lament the want of in themselves.

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### C H A P. III.

*On the religious Orders in France—On the French and English Clergy.*

THE greatest novelty to an Englishman whose first excursion abroad is to France, is the great number of clergymen and monastics he daily meets with, both in his walks, and in the companies he frequents. Notwithstanding the inutility, or rather, indeed, the pernicious consequences, of maintaining such a multitude of inactive members of society is obvious; impartiality requires it to be acknowledged that, yet abstracting from the absurdity of such institutions, and viewing them in a separate and individual light, they are usually

usually persons of a decent deportment. As their breeding is divested of the finicalness so common among other classes, it is perhaps more acceptable and faultless than that of almost any other people.

Their lives are in general exemplary; their conversation edifying, and consistent with the gravity of their profession. There are some who pique themselves in discourse on a diffusive acquaintance with worldly matters (especially the politics of their own and other nations, and the various occurrences that occupy the curiosity of the times); yet the major part are free from this ostentation, and seem addicted to pursuits more consistent with the maxims they profess.

The religious orders in France may be likened to the principal trading towns in England, Holland, or Germany. As each of those endeavour to attain a superior degree of excellence in some business or manufacture, so each order is remarkable for cultivating some particular branch of

knowledge. The Benedictines are celebrated for profound science in antiquities; the Dominicans for scholastic philosophy and divinity; the Jesuits for polite literature; and the Oratorians for mathematical studies.

This diversity in the employments peculiar to each of these orders, may easily be traced from the humour and complexion of the several times at which they were instituted.

The Benedictines, whose origin is more ancient than that of any religious order in the western parts of Christendom (being so remote as the sixth century), were, during a long course of ages, the only class of men among whom the means of obtaining knowledge were preserved. The only places where libraries could be said to exist were monasteries; they were, of consequence, led to the perusal of those numerous manuscripts they were continually busied in transcribing. Since the revival of letters, they have enriched  
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the learned world with some of the most valuable publications relating to antiquity both on ecclesiastical and prophane subjects. A Montfaucon, a Mabillon, are names sufficiently known.

The Dominicans arose when the Aristotelian philosophy, as it was impertinently called, had spread from Spain, where it was in high repute among the Moors (then masters of that country), to the other parts of Europe. As their profession was that of public instructors, agreeably to the appellation they assumed of *Frères Precheurs*, Brethren Preachers, it was natural they should endeavour to qualify themselves for such a task, by an application to what was then esteemed the most sublime and necessary of all learning.

The Jesuits, whose date is not more ancient than the æra of the Reformation, made their appearance when classical studies, long neglected and buried in the ignorance and barbarity of the middle ages, were emerging every where, and attracted



the chief notice of all who sought to shine in the republic of letters. Hence, as their institution was designed for the education of youth, it became incumbent on them to distinguish themselves by their skill in literature.

The Oratorians came not long before the middle of the last century; a period when geometry, and the other parts of mathematics, began to be cultivated with uncommon fervour. To these, they applied themselves, in conformity to the taste then prevalent; as also to logical and metaphysical studies, which were no less in vogue, and wherein they have produced some eminent proficient. The renowned Malbranche was of this order.

The difference in dress between these various bodies of men is no little curiosity, and affords matter of entertainment to Protestant strangers, unaccustomed to so preposterous a deviation from the usual modes of apparel.

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One should not, however, forget, that in those divers forms of dressing, the habit commonly worn by the vulgar, at the time of the primitive institution of several of these orders, was the model they followed. The scapulary for instance, (which is the distinguishing badge of almost all monastics) was, at first, the rough covering they threw over them when employed in manual labour, to which, though now entirely disused, they formerly dedicated a very considerable portion of their time. In the same manner, the rude, uncouth garb of the Capuchins was that of the poorer and meaner sort of people in Italy, at the superstitious period which produced this mortified set of men.

The secular clergy ought to be held in a very different light from the religious orders. They not only enjoy every privilege and every pleasure of civil life in common with the laity, but numbers of them are, in most respects, as much men of the world as any other denomination in society.

The members of the Gallican church (the title given to the ecclesiastical hierarchy in France, as established by law) have much more moderation in their temper than their brethren in Italy and Spain. They seem, at present, pretty well cured of that persecuting spirit which so fatally animated their predecessors. The chief religious inveteracy now subsisting in that kingdom is between the Molinists and the Jansenists; the first of whom may, not improperly, be compared to the warm flickers for the church of England, and the second, to the rigid Presbyterians.

The long continuance of Protestantism in France has greatly contributed to abate the force of papal superstition. Many absurd notions and practices have been exploded and abolished; and the respect and blind obedience formerly professed for the decisions and decrees of the see of Rome, daily diminishes; if one may not, on the strength of some very late occurrences, infer that it is almost reduced to nothing.

During

During the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, religious disputes were endless; and, from the objects that gave rise to them, became at last ridiculous. They considerably weakened the belief in many of those tenets which had hitherto been looked upon as sacred. Disgusted at perpetual broils about matters of no signification, and inspirited by some equally judicious and resolute individuals, the court was very near shaking off the Romish yoke. The assembly of the clergy of France (resembling our convocation in England) had already paved the way for such a step, by some very bold declarations, highly unfavourable to the papal supremacy. But the bigotry of Lewis interposed: though voluptuous in his person, he was a slave to his confessors, who were secretly in the interest of the court of Rome, and prevented the execution of this salutary scheme, to the great disappointment and grief of the sensible part of his subjects.

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The French clergy, like their English brethren, are very unequally provided for. The same scandalous methods of pluralities and sinecures prevail in both kingdoms, and are as much complained of, with as little effect. Many remedies have been proposed, and allowed to be excellently devised, and deserving of the highest notice and encouragement. But the influence of those who were at the head of affairs, and had their needy favourites to promote, has hitherto clashed with these equitable designs, which at the same time would not fail to prove detrimental to the views of those great families, who look on the revenues of the church as patrimonies reserved for their younger sons.

There is, however, one very material circumstance which renders this unequal provision less hurtful and oppressive in France than in England: and that is the celibacy of the French clergy; which enables them to struggle through life with much more facility than our churchmen. These being

ing mostly married, are obliged to look to the maintenance and establishment of generally a numerous progeny, while in France clergymen are totally exempted from this burden, to say nothing of their more frequent admission to the tables and houses of their friends and patrons, who invite them the more willingly, as they have nothing to apprehend from their endeavours at matrimonial connections with their female relations. This, which, among others, is, perhaps, one of the principal reasons why the young unmarried clergy, in England, have so small an intercourse with opulent families.

#### C H A P. IV.

*On the Food of the French, English, and other Nations—  
Effects resulting from it.*

**N**OTWITHSTANDING the French reproach us for too much indulgence in the quantity of our food, such among them as can afford it, fall not short of us  
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in this respect. The only difference is, that making more frequent and set meals, they eat less at a time than we do. It must, however, be allowed, that though the quantity be much the same, yet as their nourishment is of a lighter quality, the consequence is, naturally, an easier and less unequal flow of the animal spirits.

Much has been said on this subject of the disparity of feeding between the English and the French. Some have asserted, that the greater substantialness of our food, though it may render us less lively and jocund, is, in all likelihood, the real cause of our more solid way of thinking. They seem of opinion, that the strength derived to the body from invigorating nutriment, may be communicated to the mind; the influence over whose operations, through such kind of means, is too common and perceptible to suffer any doubt.

One may so far subscribe to this notion as to allow, that vigour and fortitude of  
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heart are much more generally found in persons that live on flesh, than in such as live on lighter meat. The Chinese, who are the least flesh-eaters, are notoriously the most unwarlike of all nations. The people of Indostan, who, from superstitious principles, abstain from animal food, are no less noted for their want of intrepidity. Those negroes in Africa, whose diet is similar, resemble them in this respect; as do those natives of South America, who feed chiefly on vegetables.

On the other hand, those nations that use much animal food, are usually the most robust and courageous. The Tartars, who live in a manner on raw flesh, are the very hardiest of men. The European Turks are the bravest of the name; and infinitely superior to the Asiatic, who draw their chief sustenance from the productions of the earth. The aborigines of North America are incomparably the most intrepid of all the nations of that vast continent. The armies of the various powers in Eu-  
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rope form indisputably not only the best disciplined, but also the most intrepid and resolute of soldiers: and it is presumed one may, without partiality, affirm there is not in the world so fearless and daring a body of men as our English sailors.

But that the intellectual faculties receive the same proportion of advantages from the greater substantialness of our food, is, it must be confessed, contrary to the sentiments of numbers that have treated elaborately of the human system. The lightest, as well as the most moderate quantity of food, is, in their judgment, the most conducive to freedom of spirits, a clear head, and depth of reflexion.

Among other remarkable instances adduced by way of proof, that the lightest of food is best calculated to leave the mind entire possession of itself, and invest it, as it were, with its fullest powers, it is recorded of Sir Isaac Newton, that when he applied himself to what is esteemed the greatest stretch of human penetration  
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the study, investigation, and analysis of the theory of light and colours) to quicken his faculties and fix his attention, he confined himself, during that time, to a small quantity of bread, with a little sack and water, of which, without any regulation, he took as he found a craving, or a failure of spirits.

In like manner it is affirmed, that Mr. Law, the famous projector of the Mississippi scheme, to keep his head clear, and faculties acute, in order to obtain a superiority of skill in gaming, lived many years on half a chicken a day, with about a pound of bread, and drank nothing but water or aqueous liquors; by which means he won considerable sums.

However, then, the greater substantialness of our food may, as it certainly does, generate courage and resolution in the inhabitants of this island, some other cause must be assigned for our more solid way of thinking. This, doubtless, is purely the effect of our political constitution; a

fact incontrovertible, when it is considered, that some centuries ago, when this nation was under various restraints from superstition or tyrannical exercise of power, there seem no sufficient grounds to conclude, that we were a more enlightened people than our neighbours.

But if intellectual abilities receive not that support and assistance from the superior copiousness and excellence of our food, which some have imagined, certain it is, on the other hand, that external comeliness, and an air of bodily vigour and prosperity, are chiefly from this, among other causes, much more diffusively met with in England than in France: blessings which, though such as possess them not, may sometimes affect to undervalue, are the more desirable, as they afford the highest enjoyment to sight, and confer a lustre on the party that enhances the worth of the noblest qualifications.

That these happy effects chiefly proceed from the cause assigned, is pretty

clear from the case of those natives of England that have been brought up in France. In the course of a few years, they not only contract the ways and habits of the French, but also assume their appearance and complexion, in a degree that almost, if not entirely, effaces the looks of an Englishman.

We may conclude this topic with observing, that the fundamental causes of these exterior advantages, are the more equal repartition of property among the subjects of this free government, and the greater diffusion of business and occupations, which enables the very lowest classes among us to procure sufficient and regular supplies of wholesome food.

This is far from being the case at all times, especially with the peasantry in some, perhaps most, other parts of Europe. Numbers of whom may be suspected to perish through absolute want and misery : which is an accident seldom known in England.

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Another very material consideration is the slovenliness, not to say filthiness of the generality of the poorer sort in France, Spain, Italy, and elsewhere. This renders them, if not less healthful, less comely and personable, than those of the same degree in England.

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## CHAP. V.

*On the People of Rank in France and England—Their different Inclinations and Pursuits.*

**P**EOPLE of rank in France are prodigiously fond of exterior marks of grandeur. From this motive they seldom stir abroad without their equipage, and would, till within these few years, have been ashamed to be seen walking the streets.

But it is observable, that since the peace, the glorious figure we made during the late war, having induced a greater number  
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of persons of distinction, of all countries, and particularly of the French nation, to visit England, they have, in consequence, begun to adopt customs which were peculiar to ourselves; people of fashion are now met walking in undress on a morning in the streets of Paris, who formerly would have thought it beneath their dignity.

It may well be imagined, however, that the imitation of the English in this respect, has not yet obtained very much in France.

In the mean time, those among the French whose circumstances will not afford a carriage, are in general remarkably careful to keep up as much state in their exterior as is compatible with prudence, and oftentimes much more.

Swords and full dresses, the wearing of which, unless on particular occasions, is so uncouth in England, were, until very lately, almost always worn in France; nor is it uncommon to see numbers of people sauntering in the streets of Paris,

as completely and magnificently apparelled as if they were going to court.

Persons of the first figure scruple not, in England, to go on foot every where, and often seem to prefer the transacting of business in this unceremonious manner: a circumstance at which foreigners, when informed of the quality and importance of the individuals they frequently meet with in their walk, are apt to testify the utmost surprize.

The truth is that the occupations of people of condition in France are much more restricted than those of their equals in England, and center chiefly among those of their own sphere. Though composing a large body, they do not give themselves much concern about any thing that is not conducive to pleasure and amusement; the only object which, in the leisure of peace, they seem to think deserving of attention, and to pursue with any ardour.

Hence,

Hence, their chief pastime is that intercourse with the fair sex which goes under the name of gallantry; an intercourse whereof vanity is the real basis: as an unfeigned attachment cannot be supposed to influence connections formed with that facility and precipitation so usual, in France, in these matters.

This employment, however, constitutes the *summum bonum* of a French man of fashion. He is never more delighted than when he imagines the whole gay world is informed, and takes notice of his proceedings in this respect; and would, indeed, be very much displeased if all his acquaintance did not participate in the knowledge of his success in such enterprises.

Pursuits of this nature are (to the honour of the English nation) much more in vogue abroad than among our nobility and gentry. Their political turn of mind engages them in frequent scenes of serious business; and will not, in general, suffer



them to idle so much of their time in needless diversions as their more voluptuous neighbours.

This propensity to dissipation in the French noblesse proceeds from the frame of their government. Not daring to meddle with public affairs in that bold open manner they ought to be treated, they leave them to such as through dint of patience and submission to the caprice of people in favour, have intrigued themselves into the ministerial departments of the state. Convinced by daily experience, that talents and capacity are not the road to preferment, they neglect the means of qualifying themselves for it: looking upon assiduity and application to the studies necessary for that purpose as labour lost, from their inefficacy in proving a recommendation, and farthering the ends of a laudable ambition. Discouraged by these unpromising prospects, and deterred by the example of those in whom the freedom of thought and speech, resulting from  
genius

genius improved by knowledge, has been severely repressed, they lose all relish for what, instead of being serviceable, may rather become dangerous. Leaving therefore those bookish lucubrations (as many affect to call them) to such as have discretion enough to read, and meditate in silence, they devote their lives to less arduous tasks; and, content with safety and ease, are only solicitous to spend their time in an incessant round of pleasures.

There is nothing, perhaps, wherein the disparity between the English and French men of fashion is more visible and striking than in their different conduct towards womankind. The French dedicate to them almost their whole time, whereas the English allow them but a moderate share of their company and attention: some have thought too moderate, considering the many improvements our sex receives by associating with the other. But if the French excel us in the advantage derivable from so pleasing an intercourse,

the misfortune is not so great when it is reflected, that by indulging it in the same excess as they do; what we might gain in delicacy and refinement, we might lose in manliness of behaviour and liberty of discourse; the two pillars on which the edifice of our national character is principally supported.

In a free state like ours, there will necessarily be found in the modes of intercourse a tincture of that unpliantness inseparable from the minds of men who feel themselves unawed by any restraints but such as affect equally the whole community: a truth which Montesquieu had evidently in his eye, when he took notice that libertinism was more prevalent in England than gallantry, from the less degree of deference and condescension required in the former.

This truth is farther illustrated, by recollecting what has been premised in the Introduction to this work, of the æras that preceded the reign of Lewis the Thirteenth.

Before

Before that period, the French were by no means the complaisant, soft-mannered people they are at present. The reason was, that they possessed much more political freedom.

Convinced that the existence and preservation of civil liberty depend not a little on the cherishing a blunt, unceremonious disposition, they who governed in his time, and who were intent on the establishment of despotism, saw the necessity of modelling the court and its adherents into those elaborate forms of politeness that would quickly be imitated in a country where the natives pique themselves on adopting whatever is exteriorly gay and splendid. They well foresaw the transition from external modes of complaisance and condescension in affairs of little moment, to obedience and submission in essential points, would in process of time be completely effected; from that natural proneness to analogy and correspondence so powerfully subsisting between all our actions.

Henry



Henry the Fourth was too honest a man, and too wise a king, either to aim at or to wish for arbitrary power. His temper, also was too frank and generous to give any countenance to cringing and adulation either in words or deportment. But they who governed after him inherited nothing of these qualities. Subtlety and artifice were at the bottom of all their conduct: as their designs regarding the public were too odious to meet with approbation, they strove, on the other hand, to render themselves acceptable by an excess of smoothness and civility in their private transactions with individuals.

Richelieu continued and perfected the system of tyranny thus begun; and it received its final confirmation under Mazarin, who contributed to fix, by his crafty management, what the other had partly founded on force and violence. The first ruined the French constitution, under pretence of asserting the dignity of the crown,

crown, and curbing the insolence of the too powerful nobility. The second strengthened the establishment of slavery, by way of restoring order and tranquillity, and banishing confusion and discord from the kingdom. The former pretended a reformation of abuses; the latter acted under the specious title of a pacificator.

Since that epocha, when peace and despotism were jointly and permanently settled throughout France; the French, it is true, have been a politer people than they were before: but surely politeness is a poor exchange, when purchased with the loss of freedom.

That disgraceful period put an end to the untameable spirit the French nobility had so long been remarkable for exerting, throughout the civil feuds wherein they were perpetually engaged. Compliance and servility took its place, and were followed by a general oblivion of the right inherent in mankind, to dissent from their rulers when these are guilty of error and oppression.

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To this meanness of disposition it was owing, that the notions prevailing at court became at last the standard of justness and propriety, and that they are now looked upon as the creed of every good and loyal man; its dictates being implicitly received with as much reverence as if unconditional, uninformed obedience was the chief merit of subjects in all political affairs.

Such are the sentiments of the generality in France; where a strange ignorance, or rather infatuation, seems to preponderate in whatever relates to the principles of government. This is the more astonishing, when we consider that the means of better information cannot be said to fail in a country, where education is on a very flourishing and illustrious footing: and where, notwithstanding the prohibition of such books as treat freely on those matters, and the strictness and severity with which the importation of them from abroad is prevented and punished, means are still contrived to introduce and circulate them in sufficient numbers to gratify  
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all who have the curiosity to peruse them.

There are, however, numerous exceptions from this spiritless strain of submission to despotic maxims. One is often agreeably surpris'd at the enlarged ideas of some individuals who have escap'd this national contagion; who think and speak as if born and bred in quite another latitude, and may not unaptly be compared to those fruits which though restricted by nature to warmer climates, the powers of art and industry are still able to produce in the frozen regions of the North.

## C H A P. VI.

*On the Influence of Fashion over the French—Their excessive Admiration of exterior Accomplishments.—Frivolousness of Discourse.*

**F**RANCE is a country where not only a staunch republican will meet with many offensive scenes, but where a lover and



and professor of that liberty and independency of thinking, which is the greatest glory, as it is the most valuable enjoyment, of rational beings, will be equally disgusted at the intellectual bondage which fetters the apprehensions of men, and suffers them not to act according to any other rule but that of the multitude.

Few individuals in France live for themselves, and can be said to follow the bent of their own inclinations in such things as must necessarily come under the cognizance of public observation.

This complying humour extends from the most material, to the most common occurrences and transactions of private life. In all these fashion is the word of command in its fullest acceptation. The various modes of living, ways of diversion, topics of conversation, compliments, dresses, and whatever belongs to appearances, are in a manner, so strictly and minutely regulated by what they have thought proper to call the *bon ton*; that

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to déviate from it, in any particular, always subjects the transgressor to the censures and criticisms of the world.

This scrupulous conformity to established manners and customs, constitutes as essential a difference as any subsisting in the character of the French, when compared with that of the English: no people acting more from pure, native, unrestrained impulse than we do, without inquiring about the ways of others; and no nation, on the other hand, more tamely submitting to the guidance of the mode, in every respect, than the French.

Another line of disparity between these two rivals, is the excessive and absurd regard shewn by the latter to secondary qualifications, such as a skill in singing, dancing, musical instruments, and other accomplishments of less merit.

These carry with them in France a far greater weight of recommendation than a person unacquainted with the French will readily conceive; many characters whose  
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worth and excellence are mentioned with the highest expressions of applause, are chiefly made up of such ingredients.

Nothing is more common than to hear in the foremost of a man's praises *quil se presente parfaitement bien*, which is no more in plain English, than he has an easy manner of presenting himself in company. It is not so much the praise as the manner in which it is spoken, that convinces one how much stress the French lay on the thing itself, and how highly it affects them.

We ought by no means to undervalue and disparage these inferior qualifications, which are undoubtedly of use as well as of ornament, and contribute at least to render our persons pleasing. But at the same time it must needs exasperate an individual of any reflection to hear every moment such acclamations of respect paid to a mere outside.

It is a general fault of the French nation to be charmed with such trifles;  
wherein

wherein he that is most expert never fails to pass *pour un homme qui sait vivre*, one who understands life. This expression, considering its real meaning, is very improper on such an occasion, and would never be seriously used for so poor a signification, in our language, which is not calculated to make much of a little subject, and apply noble words to trivial thoughts.

*Savoir vivre*, that is to say the knowledge of life, is the pompous denomination given to that experience and dexterity some folks possess, in the usual intercourse and common offices of society; who often have scarce any other merit to boast of, and whose barren capacity has enabled them to arrive no farther than at these superficial attainments: in such, however, nature, to make them some sort of amends, has generally qualified them to surpass their superiors in every other respect.

To make a bow, enter a room, or offer any thing gracefully; to accost a lady, or

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run



run over the alphabet of compliments, with an air of facility, and without the least appearance of bashfulness or inexperience, is *savoir vivre*. To excel in knowing the various reports and transactions in the gay world, is an agreeable recommendation every where in persons otherwise liberally qualified; but in France, it is a passport to the most insignificant characters. The curiosity of the French is insatiable, it treasures up every tale and story that is offered. Things that with us are no more than transient subjects of discourse, will here engross a very material portion of time and attention, and live many a long day in the remembrance of people, as the frequent recalling of them to notice in conversation but too evidently proves.

We need not, however, be surprised that uninteresting objects, should, in France, come so frequently under discussion. The minds of men in arbitrary governments, are designedly diverted from any freedom  
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of exertion, and forced to keep their distance from speculations of national importance. These the ruling powers will always labour to secure from too nice and prying an inspection, through a consciousness of the danger resulting to their authority from a public reciprocation of sentiments on affairs of state.

This policy, common to all the despotic courts of Europe, none is more studious to enforce, by all the means that power has put into its hands, than that of France. This is the true cause of the amazing frivolity of speech that reigns in the generality of French companies.

After having thus freely expatiated on the depravity of taste introduced and established in conversation, it is but justice to acknowledge that, notwithstanding the futility of the matters treated of, the method of handling them makes one almost forget their unworthiness to employ our thoughts. Gracefulness and facility of expression seem to characterise the French when thus

engaged. However we may prefer the sterling, instructive discourses that are certainly more frequent among people of education in England, we should not at the same time refuse a due share of praise to those capacities, which are able to erect such pleasing edifices from such paltry materials; which can amuse at the same time that we despise the subject of our amusement; which, in short, can enslave our attention in spite of our understanding; and may with the utmost propriety be said in the language of Swift, to raise the gaudiest tulips from the poorest soil.

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## C H A P. VII.

*On the French Ladies.*

**W**OMEN, in every country, have always much to do, and more to say; but in France they in a manner dictate all that is to be said, and prescribe all  
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that is to be done in the genteel world. They who think greatly of the native talents of womankind, will meet in France with stronger proofs of the rectitude of their notions than perhaps any where. In England, the glory of the sex is modesty in their behaviour, and discretion in their words. Though possessed of an exquisite share of wit and sense, they have too much prudence to make a parade of either: thinking it more eligible to reserve them for use on proper opportunities, than to throw them away in ostentation. However severely we reflect upon our women, for being too curious and inquisitive, it may be affirmed that, when compared to the French, the English women seem rather to shun occasions of meddling with the concerns of others, and are not fond of laying out their abilities unless necessity compel, or interest authorise their exertion. Such, in general, is the temper and disposition of the fair sex in our island.



Far different is that of the French women: no country producing such a restless, busy race; ever on the *qui vive*, ever seeking how to employ their active spirits, and never satisfied, unless immersed in the prosecution of some scheme; as much for the sake of employment, as with a view to succeed.

Were one inclined to be jocular on this subject, one might suppose, that from indignation at their being excluded, by the constitution, from the inheritance of the crown, they were determined to make themselves amends, by laying claim to the real government of those who have done them so much injustice.

This they have effected in the completest manner; no people being more the dupes and subjects of their women than the French. They bear a considerable and material part in all transactions. Their influence is not confined to the gay and pleasurable provinces of life; they boldly enter into the most grave and weighty

weighty departments ; and it is amazing of what a share they can too justly boast in the management of things of the highest concern.

If credit may be given to those who, from the importance of their station, may well be presumed to have access to the knowledge of such facts, there is nothing in the profoundest depth of politics out of their reach. Nothing passes at court, in town or country, without their interference. Their activity, or, to speak more properly, their intriguing restlessness, penetrates every where, and is attended with so powerful a preponderance, that councils are summoned, and consultations held, when the decision has previously been prepared and fixed by their artifices.

The very clergy is not independent of them, however one might reasonably presume such a body of men secure from female intrusion on the business of their profession. But the case is quite otherwise. One hardly hears of any spiritual

preferment which the ladies have not proved highly instrumental in procuring; and they are avowedly looked upon as the best and most effectual patrons, by the whole body of ecclesiastics.

Neither, indeed, is that distance observed here between the women and the secular clergy, which the vow of celibacy in these latter seems naturally to imply. On the contrary, there is not a class of mortals that appear more fully convinced of the necessity of associating with the fair sex. There is no lady of any distinction, or even of any tolerable appearance in life, whose toilet is not honoured with some clerical attendant, who either has, or pretends to have it in view, to obtain her interest and protection.

A lady's toilet here is, in truth, the shrine at which all men of genteel rank offer up their daily services: no woman is in the least ashamed of seeing herself in the midst of a male crowd of morning visitors. The toilets of women of prime fashion,

fashion, are frequented by suitors of all denominations, it being principally here they dispatch their most material business: and enough they most assuredly have. Excepting the formal transactions of things by penmanship, there is nothing they do not accomplish the settlement of, with a readiness and facility men are generally strangers to. Such, indeed, is the ease and expedition they proceed with, that they may fairly be said to do all things *tout en badinant*, as the phrase represents them, by way of play and pastime: so remarkable is the festivity of their deportment, even in the most arduous and difficult affairs.

Neither are their spiritual directors prohibited from making their appearance at such times, in virtue of that capacity. They are taken indiscriminately from the whole corps of secular and regular clergy, just as fancy prompts their fair penitents, who profess great attachment and partiality for their holy guides, while these are able to humour them.

But



But if, through the severity of their notions, or the disagreeableness of their manners, they become unacceptable, there is a remedy at hand in the liberty the women enjoy of changing directors as often as they think proper, their choice being wholly free in that respect. This, indeed, is a privilege many of them are pleased to make a very frequent use of. It is no uncommon thing for a lady, in the effusion of her heart, to mention no small catalogue of them to her familiars, without the least sign of shame at such a glaring proof of the unsteadiness of her disposition. The story in the *Diabla Boiteux*, of a lady's conduct relating to her spiritual director, is an exact representation of the French female world in that particular.

A circumstance should not be omitted, often displeasing to a husband (if any thing can disturb the serenity of a French husband, the most tranquil and easy of all creatures in what regards his wife), which is, that many of these ghostly fathers are  
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young and handsome, and sometimes perhaps deserving of a much less spiritual appellation.

But jealousy is by no means a characteristic of the French. They live in the utmost harmony with their merry partners ; and seem not, in Milton's phrase, to deem over reverently of the nuptial bed. If appearances may be relied on, accounts are, in general, pretty near balanced on either side.

Nevertheless it were wrong to infer, that connubial happiness is a stranger in France. It is, on the contrary, much to be questioned, whether we can find any where more agreeable instances of it. When a fond pair meet in this country, their natural good-humour and chearfulness, their concurrence in whatever has a tendency to promote mirth, and, above all, their native abhorrence of mutual mistrust, renders their life a scene of perpetual gladness ; and those liberties, which in other countries would often occasion suspicions,

cions, if not a total separation, are suffered here *sans aucun consequence*, without any attention being paid to them.

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## C H A P. VIII.

*On the French Abbés.*

**W**HILE taking notice of the domestic and familiar intercourse subsisting between the clergy and the fair sex in France, it were unpardonable to omit a being of which we simple protestants entertain no sort of idea.

This being is what they call here an *abbé*, a term not to be rendered in our language, as their existence is posterior to the Reformation, and no such character was known among the Romanists till about a century and a half ago, and scarce even then. Their origin, like that of some nations, is hardly discernible; though one may venture to assert that France has  
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the best right to claim the merit of having produced them.

Their first appearance seems to have been about the commencement of the last century. Before that æra it is presumed the title of Abbé is not to be met with, unless in the monastic sense (in which it is very ancient,) or to denote a person possessor of those revenues of an abbey that fell to the department of the abbot ; but the now common and almost burlesque denomination of *abbé* is of the recent date above mentioned.

It is, however, a very convenient word to signify what could not otherwise be comprised in one ; as an *abbé*, according to the strictest definition, is a person who has not yet obtained any precise or fixed settlement in church or state, but most heartily wishes for, and would accept of either, just as it may happen.

In the mean while their privileges are many. They are admissible in all companies, and no degradation to the best, notwithstanding



withstanding they are sometimes found in the worst. Their dress is rather that of an academic, or of a professed scholar, than of an ecclesiastic; and never varying in colour is no incumbrance on the pocket. Their society is far from avoided; as numbers of them are genteel, sensible, well-bred, and enlightened men, fit for the conversation of any whose pursuit is either entertainment or instruction.

It should also be remembered, that the title of *abbé* is not only applicable to those we have been describing, but likewise to ecclesiastics of the highest rank; cardinals and bishops only being above it in the usual mention of churchmen; all degrees of whom it is otherwise promiscuously annexed to, and neither hurts nor benefits any body's character.

And really it is some comfort to a poor gentleman, as well as scholar, that he can produce himself to the community under the shelter of some decent appellation. That of gentleman becomes ridiculous  
when

when the means of supporting it are apparently wanting ; and that of scholar would be rather vain and affected.

These *abbés* are very numerous, and no less useful. They are in colleges, the instructors of youth ; in private families, the tutors of young gentlemen : and many procure a decent livelihood by their literary and witty compositions of all kinds, from the profoundest philosophy to the most airy romances. They are, in short, a body of men who possess a fund of universal talents and learning ; and are incessantly employed in the cultivation of every various branch of literature and ingenuity. No subject whatever escapes them ; serious or gay, solid or ludicrous, sacred or profane, all pay tribute to their researches. As they are conversant in the lowest as well as the highest topics, their fame is equally great in the learned and in the scribbling world.

An essential article would be wanting in this description of the *abbés* were we to pass

pass by their devotion to the fair sex ; whose favourites, in return, they have the honour of being in the fullest and most enviable degree. The wit and smartness for which they are usually remarkable, are just the very thing that suits the ladies in France, where it is more in request, and less willingly dispensed with, in all who aim at ingratiating themselves with the sex, than in any other country. *De l'esprit et de la vivacité*, a lively and facetious disposition, is the only passport which will ensure the party a gracious reception in the generality of French companies. As the ladies sit umpires, they who are deficient in what they deem the most necessary requisite, will make but a very indifferent figure.

Though we serious, grave Englishmen are by no means undervalued among the French gentlewomen, who know how to set a proper estimation on our respective merit, yet they are ever accusing us of being perpetually plunged in a reverie,

from which nothing can totally extricate us.

Their accusation, however, falls erroneously on numbers of our countrymen, who are as jocund and airy as the merriest and most lively of their own. But then the gaiety of an Englishman is only occasional, the *toujours gay* is peculiar to a Frenchman. It is worth observing, that such a disposition is so very far from being natural to the former, that an affectation of it is the great *pierre d'achoppement*, the sure stumbling-block of our young English travellers. An Englishman, indeed a man of any nation, always appears to the best advantage, when he shews himself as he really is, and seeks not to set himself off by airs that are foreign to his temper and education; and which only lay him open to ridicule, by the awkwardness of his endeavours to imitate originals, of which he was never designed for a copy.

To return to our *abbés*: they are like Gay's Universal Apparition, present every

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where.



where. The reason of which is obvious, being sought after by most people, on various accounts, as they are equally men of business and pleasure, not less expert in the most serious transactions than fond of enjoying their share of whatever occupies the gay world. They diligently frequent all public spectacles, which are thought incomplete without them; as they compose the most intelligent part of the company, and are the most weighty approvers or condemners of what passes in almost all places.

Certain it is, that they are in many respects, not only the inspectors, but the censors general of the land: and that the judgments which flow from their tribunals are commonly very decisive; more perhaps than some personages of very elevated stations would suffer them to be, if their power extended to the controulment of the understanding.

CHAP.

## C H A P. IX.

*The two former Subjects continued.*

**I**T is principally from the *abbés* the French ladies of the beau monde receive their instructions; between them both a coalition is formed, that pronounces the fate of every production, of the light amusive kind.

Polite literature is in high request with numbers of the fair sex in France. Many a lady's library makes no unvoluminous appearance; and, what is more to the purpose, many a one is as solicitous to read books as to purchase them. To the honour of women of fashion here, it may without flattery be said, that a large proportion of them have found the valuable secret of reconciling pleasure with improvement. Many of the most youthful and airy deserve the same compliment.

Their education contributes powerfully to give them this happy turn. As they

are brought up in convents, books are often the only refuge they have from silence and tediousness. As they are generally endowed with lively parts, they cannot fail to improve them by this best of all methods, which is rendered the more effectual by the time solitude affords them to reflect and ponder on what they read. Hence, in regard to intellectual acquirements, some very extraordinary characters are found among the French ladies who have been thus educated; to say nothing of the regularity of the life led there, and the principles of virtue which are so carefully inculcated in those useful recesses from the idleness and dissipation of the world. Notwithstanding the established prevalence of many superstitious practices in such places, it were highly injurious to deny that the utmost pains are taken to form the mind, and lay the foundation of every laudable accomplishment: this indeed is a fact so well known, that it too often induces protestant parents  
to

to send their children to France for education, in defiance of the many political as well as religious considerations that should deter them.

A devotion to the severer studies cannot well be supposed in the fair sex: but the polite and elegant, and all that is understood by the *belles lettres*, many of them are very conversant in. This is most agreeably experienced by those who have the pleasure of a diffusive acquaintance among the French ladies; as it is at the same time a no less rational than strong inducement for men of sense and merit to court and cultivate so enchanting a society.

This happiness is far from difficult to obtain: foreigners of good behaviour, and properly recommended, are admitted into the best companies with no less facility than their own people.

It were, indeed, to be wished that many of our young gentlemen would take more pains to procure themselves a foot-



ing in some of their genteel families; they could then, on returning among their countrymen, give a more satisfactory account of their time than their employment of it while abroad, enables them generally to do. Instead of the supercilious, unjust contempt they often affect to display for the characters they have seen, or rather, indeed, pretend to have seen in foreign parts, they would enjoy the pleasurable recollection of many worthy persons of both sexes, whose company and conversation proved the fortunate means of preserving them from the many inconveniences and accidents into which the inconsiderateness of our travelling youth, in the choice of the society they frequent, so often and sometimes so fatally hurries them: a society too commonly made up of those adventurers who lie on the catch for wealthy young travellers, and of those other members of the community, a total retrenchment of whom is not less desirable than next to impracticable.

Neither

Neither is it improper to recommend a particular acquaintance and intimacy with such of the *abbés* as are persons of parts and character. They will learn, through their means, whatever is fit for a gentleman to know. As many of them are in easy circumstances, men of address and genteel qualifications, and very often of distinguished families, they will serve them as introducers into the best houses; not to mention their readiness and complaisance in communicating whatever is deserving of notice; a disposition for which the French are remarkable. This certainly is a persuasive reason why foreigners who seek for instruction should be desirous of associating with people who are so liberal in admitting others to a participation of their knowledge; and so entirely above the affectation of appearing mysterious and reserved; a vice of which the French are as little guilty as any people in the world.

Add to this their willingness to oblige, on all those emergencies, which, though not productive of any pecuniary inconvenience to themselves, are still proofs of a kind and benevolent nature. In these exertions of good humour and affability, they are an example to mankind. They manifest a peculiar alacrity when engaged in the assistance of strangers; of the English especially, whose esteem and approbation they seem particularly desirous to obtain; a circumstance which ought surely to induce us to bestow as much of our good will and gratitude upon them, as is consistent with the duty we owe to our country.

Some of the English, it must be confessed, are apt to carry this remembrance of past courtesies to very immoderate lengths. They become so enamoured of France and its inhabitants, as to forget the superior ties that bind them to their own nation; and in the enthusiasm of their attachment to that country, are so lavish  
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and profuse in its praises, as to prefer it to their own, even in those things wherein its inferiority is apparent.

This, however, is a fault of which our English travellers are not often guilty : the generality of them err on the opposite side ; and instead of doing justice to the French for the good qualities they possess, are, on the contrary, studious to discover, and quick-eyed in perceiving, wherein they are deserving of censure.

This necessary inquiry should also have its turn ; but for that very reason every impartial observer should consider it as a duty to represent them in as amiable colours as truth requires.

Such a method alone is to be pursued, when we would travel to any purpose. By impressing us with a due respect for the peculiar excellencies of a nation, it insensibly creates an habit of cherishing praise-worthy qualifications, wherever we find them ; and diminishes that ferocious antipathy, fatally too common between

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individuals of divers countries. The unaccountable prepossessions of various nations against each other would gradually subside, and lose themselves at last in a laudable spirit of emulation, were they not ungenerously fomented by those, who from that conviction of their perniciousness which education, and the experience of the world produce, ought sincerely to wish and seriously to labour for their suppression.

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## C H A P. X.

*On the French Officers.*

THERE is a class of men in France, who ought perhaps to have been mentioned before the *abbés*; these are the gentlemen of the army, who here, as well as in all absolute monarchies, are the main pillar of the government, and the true colossus that exalts royalty above all other

other considerations, and renders it independent of reason, laws, and equity.

But while thus compelled by their office and military duty to be the abettors of tyranny in its utmost latitude, they are, in all other respects, men of as much honour and principle as any in the kingdom.

Their profession being held the most honourable of any in France, we need not wonder it is so amazingly crowded. Whoever has no inclination to enter upon the list of *abbés*, and yet is ambitious to lead a genteel life, embraces the profession of arms.

In a decent reputable family, one member must of course be devoted to the service of the king; another to that of the church; and the next to the law. This is meant of the secondary classes. As to those of the *premiere volée*, the prime rate, the army and church only are deemed worthy of their thoughts; and the option lies solely between these two. Commerce never enters into the conceptions, either  
of

of the first or second degrees of people in this country: a circumstance which no thinking Englishman will lament.

The education of those who are destined for a military life, is not much, nor long confined to the limits of a college. As soon as a commission can be procured, the youth is taken from his studies, and initiated at once in all the liberty and licentiousness too unfortunately attending the vocation of a foldier.

Though it must not be denied that the generality of the French officers are men of integrity, and deserving by their behaviour the appellation of gentlemen; yet it must also be allowed that the younger sort are perhaps the wildest, and the most addicted to the irregularities of youth, of any of their age and profession throughout all Europe.

As they are usually persons of birth, and full of those prejudices current among all who glory in the name of noblesse, they think it incumbent on them to keep  
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their character spotless and unfulled by the least deviation from the path of honour. This is frequently a narrow one in France, where, from prejudices of long standing, military gentlemen find it difficult in some cases to conduct themselves with prudence and propriety.

If among persons of maturity and discretion, the fiery temper of the nation is apt often to occasion very serious differences, it is much worse among the youthful part that belongs to the military list. Among these, altercations and quarrels succeed each other with uninterrupted rapidity; and lives are daily thrown away in the most wanton manner. This is attended with a passiveness in those who ought to prevent such mischief that is inexcusable; since no pretext can justify the conniving at individuals making their appeal to the sword in private disputes. The only motive that has ever been pleaded, is the necessity of preserving a high strain of personal courage and resolution



lution among individuals whose duty it is to look upon life with indifference.

But this argument falls to the ground, when we reflect that this barbarous custom was utterly unknown to the Greeks and the Romans, on whose valour it were impertinent to make any encomium. The Turks, indisputably as brave a people as any in modern ages, far from looking on it as any proof of intrepidity, give it its proper name, by calling it the height of madness and infatuation.

As this subject will be enlarged upon hereafter, suffice it now to observe, that more swords are drawn among the young officers in France than among all the other gentlemen of their profession in Europe. This will excite no surprize when it is considered that, exclusive of those absurd notions of honour which compel them, in a manner, to expose themselves to destruction on the most frivolous pretences, the vanity that annexes so much intrinsic merit to their employment, is  
ever

ever stimulating them to make a display of their spirit, and almost to seek occasions of convincing the world they are men of courage. Add to this the ascendancy which the military is encouraged by the government to assume in all companies, and upon all occasions : a privilege one may well imagine they are ready enough to maintain ; none more than they, whose youth and inexperience least entitled them to such presumption. The pride and impertinence of those upstarts meet often however with the severest chastisement.

From these considerations it must be evident that the condition of a military man in France, is far from being enviable in the eye of reason : and that the French army is a field of incessant danger ; where, from the native warmth and impetuosity of the nation, together with the false maxims held up for the guidance of all who aspire at the appellation of men of honour, and industriously propagated

by the ruling members of that numerous part of the community, a young gentleman of any reflection must, of consequence, be very unhappy, when he coolly ponders on what a small thread his existence is hourly depending.

After viewing what is disadvantageous and gloomy, let us, on the other hand, acknowledge that there is not a more respectable body of men in France than the generality of their officers, when they have once past what Shakspeare so emphatically styles the "hey-day of blood." Politeness and good breeding are found among them in the completest perfection. They are usually persons of the most refined behaviour, and replenished with sentiments of the most real, genuine honour: not only that which means a spirit above suffering the least affront or indignity, but that more useful exaltedness of mind which is founded on good sense, and a comprehensive knowledge of justness and propriety: and which ad-  
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mits of no immorality in conduct, nor indecency in manners. Such are in general the senior officers in the French service; which, it may not be amiss to take notice, is far from lucrative: a common observation among them is, that a French gentleman is usually ruined, and an English one enriched in the service of his country.

Though it has been observed that temper and moderation are not the characteristics of the younger officers in the French army; yet, in all other respects, they fully deserve the name of gentlemen. The noble mindedness of such as are in affluent circumstances is peculiarly remarkable. There is, perhaps, no class of people wherein more frequent instances of the most friendly and disinterested generosity are daily exhibited.



## C H A P. XI.

*The same Subject continued.*

**T**HERE are no individuals in France who seem more elated with their condition and appearance, than those who are decorated with the order of St. Louis. To officers who had distinguished themselves, this order was instituted to serve as a recompence in default of more solid and substantial rewards, though generally the proof as well as the badge of military merit ; yet there was a time, not remote from its institution, when a very trifling sum indeed was adequate to the purchase. This happened during Chamillard's ministry, in the latter period of Lewis the Fourteenth's reign ; when it should not be forgot, that even the rank and privileges of *noblesse* were not less openly put to sale, at no exorbitant price. These are incidents that have done irreparable damage to both these modes of honour, by  
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diminishing their value, in proportion to the meanness of the pecuniary consideration they were rated at: a circumstance well remembered to this day, and often cited by those who were no friends to these imaginary distinctions; as looking upon them, from their occasional prostitution, to be no real criterion of desert.

Well, therefore, may an Englishman (as the French complain is often the case) hold in derision, honours which he possesses money sufficient to purchase perhaps a hundred fold.

These knights of St. Louis are almost equal in number to a little army; and swarm, like the abbés, in all places and assemblies. They are allowed, almost every where, the *haut bout*, the first and best place. Persons of all degrees think themselves honoured by their acquaintance and company. The fair sex, especially, is fond of their attendance. It is principally on public occasions, such as great meetings and festivals, that one

may be witness how powerfully the *insignia* of this order can operate. While crowds of persons genteely drest, and gentlemen to all appearance, solicit in vain for admittance into the choir, or other conspicuous place, a single word from one of these *croix*, crosses as they are styled, will make the gates fly open for his immediate reception, without the least hesitation.

Other instances of more importance might be produced, as proofs of their influence and authority. One may frequently see the most violent agitation of a mob quieted instantly by the interposition of one of them, in a manner completely answering to those celebrated lines of Virgil, that represent the quelling of a tumult.

From a desire to figure in the list of these *chevaliers*, which from the above examples entitle a man to so much deference and respect, and from sundry other motives very urgent with men so enamoured

moured with exterior splendor as the French, originates that almost universal propensity of the younger sons of wealthy families in France, to embrace the military profession. It is there they can improve to the highest advantage that fund of ostentation so common to all the natives, and indulge in the ideas of pre-eminence over all their fellow-subjects.

Fired with these views, hither the youth of France crowd from all quarters, giving up, without regret, all those prospects of profit and interest that commerce and other lucrative vocations afford. The more flattering certainty of arriving at immediate notice and consideration outweighs, with them, the distant, however well-grounded, hopes of ease and affluence by the means of trade; which, even in its most inviting and honourable light, that of a *negociant*, a merchant, is not able to administer to their vanity in the same proportion as a suit of regimentals. This, in their opinion, exalts a man over



all other degrees, and is, the *palma nobilis* which *terrarum dominos evehit ad deos*, the golden prize that lifts him up from obscurity, and sets him on a level with the best men in the land.

And indeed a French officer's pretensions, are very far from ideal only. If he looks on no condition as equal to his own, and thinks no company whatever too good for him, there is not, 'on the other hand, any class of individuals hardy enough to avow a belief of their superior importance; and no company, however disinclined, dares manifest an aversion to his society. Thus prompted by his own forwardness, and encouraged by the concurrent approbation, or rather, to express it properly, the universal homage of all people, he enjoys, without the least check, that plenitude of consequence which pride cherishes in his imagination, and which is still more effectually supported and realized by the favourable attention so readily paid by the ruling

ing powers in France, to the concerns of all who are invested with a military character. This is not only the most honoured, but what is more essential, the securest of any station in life, against the oppressive spirit of the government. In the most absolute monarchies, the ministry is always bound to cast an eye of respect and predilection on those belonging to the army, that necessary friend to despotism, whose exertion in all good constitutions, is never directed but abroad, and seldom is felt at home, without becoming an instrument of tyranny.

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## C H A P. XII.

*On the French Lawyers—Differ from the English in their Manner of Pleading.*

NEXT to the military are the gownsmen and lawyers, a wealthy and innumerable class of men. But the

profession is rather creditable than honourable in France. It is with difficulty that persons of the first figure therein can procure themselves nuptial alliances with noble families. This is owing to that Gothic prejudice, that only the sword can dignify a man: a notion which, even in these enlightened times, is still amazingly prevalent in most parts of Europe, chiefly those from whence liberty is banished. Its expulsion is soon followed by that of its most valuable concomitant, justness of reasoning, which is an happiness rarely known where thoughts have not a boundless freedom.

Many of the gownsmen in France are persons of great learning, and of the most exemplary integrity: devoting their whole time and abilities to the service of the public, without any other views than those of the most consummate patriotism. Such a testimony they are justly intitled to, after the noble opposition which, a few years since, all Europe admired how they  
durst

durst attempt against the lawless omnipotence of a proud and arbitrary court, enraged at the smallest doubt of its authority, and struck with equal surprize and indignation that so much resolution should be shewn in thwarting measures it had not less the means than the will to enforce, in spite of any legal stand.

Eloquence seems to be much more attended to in the French Courts of Judicature than in ours; where solid, sterling, though unadorned sense appears more welcome. It must nevertheless be confessed that if the precepts and examples of Cicero and Demosthenes were more observed in the English courts, they would certainly prove of no detriment to truth and reason.

In consequence of this superior attention to the arts of oratory, it may be affirmed that, saving that boldness of thought and expression, whereof a greater measure will always be found in a land of liberty, there is, perhaps, more entertainment for an admirer of classical and regular oratory



tory in the Palais at Paris, than in Westminster-hall at London. In the former of these places our attention is engaged by the art and elegance of composition manifest in their pleadings. As they appeal principally to the imagination, they are clad in all the ornaments of rhetorical ingenuity: while in our courts, however strong and powerful the arguments, and however proper and apposite the words may be which may convey them, still there is a neglect of elocution, and those graces that add influence and dignity to the soundest reasoning; and of which, though he may not be able to define them, an auditor feels the operation and efficacy.

The members of the law in France, are no less expert in the arts of thriving and raising immense fortunes than their brethren in other parts, and enjoy a share of riches not unequal to what falls to the lot of the same profession in England. Like them too they are subject to that envy and  
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popular malevolence which wealth, acquired through the mere folly of mankind, renders the possessors liable to execration from the multitude.

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### C H A P. XIII.

*On the French Financiers—Administration of the Revenue.*

**T**HERE is a class of people in France, which, though yielding precedence to the lawyers, are incomparably superior to them in the article of riches; and who may not improperly be said to amass them by serving their royal master with their pen. This, however, is not to be understood of those legions of mercenary writers who prostitute their talents in the support of tyranny, and labour to oppress and fetter the mind, while others keep the body in subjection. These, doubtless, are numerous

merous in France, as well as in all countries where the principles of despotism are triumphant. The tribe meant here is composed of quite another kind of individuals, who, though they assist as much, if not more than the former, in the work of public oppression, are much better paid for it; and may be said to riot in the spoils of their country, while the others are glad to compound for a very scanty pittance.

The gentlemen here spoken of are the *maltotiers et gens de finance*, tax-gatherers, and officers of the revenue, who are indisputably the richest people in the nation. It is incredible with what rapidity they arrive at prodigious wealth. Whatever industry is exerted by the ablest adepts in the other gainful departments, it is far surpassed by the dexterity of the French financiers. Neither is it less surprising with what splendor they dare enjoy these equally dazzling and sudden fortunes, the whole realm being sensible that it is purely

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ly through the mismanagement, the indolence, or the connivance of its governors, that such a plunder of the nation is carried on: and that it were no difficult matter, by a due enquiry into the methods of levying the public revenue, to correct the enormities that have been so long permitted in them, and to settle this province of the political system on a much more beneficial plan.

In this instance, more than in any other, France is continually made a victim to the most audacious and most barefaced spirit of jobbing. No European state has suffered more from a misunderstood or an ill-conducted arrangement of its finances. There are but two periods in the history of that kingdom, when they can be said to have been well administered. The first was during the reign of Henry the Fourth, when, under the auspices of that great patriot king, they were, through the diligence and abilities of the celebrated Sully, retrieved from that horrible confusion



sion a civil war of half a century had thrown them into. The second followed after the lapse of no less an interval, and was due to the illustrious Colbert; under whose ministry were formed those salutary schemes that made France so respectable to its neighbours. But they terminated with his life; and long before the end of his master Lewis the Fourteenth's reign, misery and desolation had overspread the face of the whole kingdom. Since those days little has been done to remedy the mischiefs occasioned through want of oeconomy and good order. Projects and systems of divers kinds have had their turn; but to no other purpose than to render people very suspicious of all who had any to propose. Instead of coming to any fixed settlement in these matters, shifts and expedients have been adopted successively, according to the temper and capacity of the ministers. Though they have all been unanimous enough in loading the subject to his utmost bearing,

yet the same ruinous modes of collecting the imposts still remain, and none have been bold or sagacious enough to attempt the carrying of any others into execution.

This, however, is a subject whereon so much has already been, though much more might be said, that one may dismiss it with this single remark, that in England, a free state, where no money is raised but with the consent of the nation, and where the issuing out and employment of it is narrowly inspected by all parties; if in defiance of the precautions so minutely ordained by the legislature, frauds, collusions, and embezzlements can still find admittance, what must it be, where government is exercised by caprice? where a few individuals are invested with the uncontrollable direction of the whole; where secret intrigues are the *primum mobile* that set the political machine in motion; where the public good is so far from being the usual object in view, that it is often not even made  
a pre-

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a pretence; where the court and its adherents are the sole actors; where the royal power, like a bottomless gulf, absorbs all the strength and vigour of the realm, and may be likened to the monstrous head of a disproportionate body, whose necessary nourishment is drained away by every possible channel, for the sole support of that unwieldy part, which, though it may display a florid appearance itself, leaves all the other members in a state of debility?

These incidents ought frequently to be present to the mind of an Englishman, who feels a sincere affection to his country. They will contribute to confirm his attachment to its constitution. It is impossible for a reasonable man to observe the vast difference subsisting between it and that of France, without commiserating the case of such as live under the latter, and firmly resolving never to be accessory, or submit to the introduction of it among us.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XIV.

*On the French Noblesse.*

THE French *noblesse* (we should not call it nobility, the meaning of which word is of far higher import) are a numerous and formidable body of individuals. By formidable is meant only to the lower sort, over whom they are most shamefully allowed to tyrannise, being otherwise as submissive to the government as any other Frenchmen, without the least exception of the highest and most dignified among them. The fact is, that they are the strenuous champions and supporters of passive obedience and non-resistance to the will and injunctions of the court.

As an encouragement and reward for this devotion and zeal, which they seize every opportunity to testify, they enjoy several immunities that serve not a little to enhance the notions of their self-importance ; and at the same time to excite the

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envy of the *bourgeois* and the *roturiers*, names they indiscriminately bestow on all their inferiors ; though the former belongs usually but to reputable commoners, and the latter is only applicable to what we call the vulgar.

Vanity, carried to its most absurd and ridiculous excess, seems to be the foible of the French *noblesse*. Many of our own are apt to commit such follies as betray a far greater persuasion of the intrinsic merit of their rank than is consistent with reason : a failing chiefly remarkable in those who have been much abroad, and have imbibed the erroneous ideas prevalent and powerfully authorized by the example and countenance of persons in power. But whatever the errors may be to which our own nobility are liable, they are nothing to the proud and haughty behaviour of the French nobles, and the contempt wherein they hold their inferiors.

The *noblesse*, in France, may be divided into *haute et basse*, high and low. The first

first of these epithets is common: the other not unknown, but rather not much insisted on, or used; as it is accompanied with a diminutive idea, and would sound harsh in the ears of many a French noble; who has often very little more than the empty sound itself to feed his imagination with. The division, however, is not the less real. By the *haute noblesse* is always meant persons of great birth or great titles. Great opulence is not a necessary adjunct. By the *basse noblesse* is understood new made nobles; nobles by their employments, or such noble families whose titles are of the lowest order, and who have never made any figure.

The degree of pride in France, arising from ancestry, bears a medium between that of Germany (where it is a merit of the first magnitude) and that of England; where good sense regulates our notions in that respect, and teaches us to esteem a man rather for following the footsteps of his illustrious forefathers than merely for owing to them his origin.



Nobleness of blood, in France, is an invincible protection from the insults and slight of the vulgar. These are early taught to reverence their superiors without measure; and to act, on all occasions, with the most boundless deference and condescension in whatever relates to them.

However penurious the circumstances of a noble may be, or however insignificant his personal character, yet his company is always acceptable among his equals. They think it incumbent on them to shew him their good-will, and lend him their assistance to the utmost of their abilities, and never hesitate to espouse his cause in case of any difference with such as are of a subordinate condition.

Among these the society of a noble is courted with a warmth, and often a servility that shews how extravagantly it is valued: though it seldom happens that any benefit is derived from it, the usual motives that induce the *noblesse* to associate with the lower ranks being those of interest.

rest. Such as commanding a standing unceremonious welcome to a plentiful table; the obtaining a pecuniary loan, or a rich wife, and other views of the like nature.

But the greatest and most valuable prerogative of the French *noblesse* is the prompt introduction it procures them to the notice of men in power. Being themselves members of the same body, and violently partial in its favour, they never scruple to decide with the utmost peremptoriness against all other rivals for such posts of honour or profit as may, without derogating from their dignity, be exercised or enjoyed by nobles.

Few, indeed, are they who possess any employments of consequence, and are at the same time persons of ignoble extraction, and such as have risen by dint of pure merit. The jealousy of the *noblesse* in suffering none but themselves to arrive at places of eminence is ever on the watch; and they esteem it an indignity offered to

their characters, when such individuals are placed on a parity of rewards and notice with them.

One thing is very deserving of remark not only among people of quality, but also among other ranks in France ; that is the magnificence they all affect to display in their coats of arms. Whether nobles or commoners it is all one. Coronets and supporters are promiscuously the claim of both. A foreigner (an Englishman particularly) is often perplexed how to distinguish a *bourgeois* from the *nobleſſe*, as in England none but the nobility pretend to coronets and supporters.

When we conſider how tenacious the French *nobleſſe* are of their privileges, and the diſtance at which they keep their inferiors, in all other reſpects, it is abſolutely ſurprizing they ſhould not, after the example of our nobility, have found means to confine theſe armorial diſtinctions to their own body.

It may, however, be added, that this fooliſh preſumption reaches much farther than

than France. It is not uncommon, even in London, for persons transplanted hither from abroad, to use the most splendid arms on their seals; though they may have discretion enough to abstain from the absurdity of painting them on their coaches. The whole continent of Europe is pretty guilty of this infatuation, Holland itself not excepted; though a country where empty pageantry is less in vogue than any where. Yet here there are not a few (chiefly the descendants of refugees from other parts) who have inherited the vanity of their ancestors in this particular.

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## C H A P. XV.

*On the Treatment of Foreigners in France—and Men of Abilities.*

**I**N no country whatever are they who possess pecuniary independence more caressed and courted than in France. Hence none are so much respected there as the

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English;



English; who carry with them, wherever they go, the infallible means of procuring themselves a distinguished reception.

Notwithstanding the French boast that their country is *l'azile des malheureux*, the refuge of the unfortunate, and that *chacun retrouve chez eux sa patrie*, that every man finds himself at home among them; in spite of these magnificent encomiums, France cannot be reputed a country where foreigners are more welcome to put themselves on a level with the natives than they are in any other.

While curiosity is the only motive that leads persons thither, their time will certainly pass as agreeably as any where; but they must not presume to go further, unless they are previously resolved to face the fullest opposition to their pretensions.

The French, like all other people, are extremely averse to foreigners aspiring at public employments among them. But exclusive of those obvious considerations  
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that render this jealousy of strangers natural and universal in all countries, they are, at the same time, much more actuated by pride than other nations: as they deem all places of emolument or honour, conferred upon foreigners, as so many recompences refused to superior merit among themselves.

Among a number of instances that might be cited, this arrogant disposition was scandalously manifested in the case of the great Marshal Saxe, as well as of his illustrious colleague Marshal Lowendal; who, notwithstanding their signal services to the French nation, could not escape its envy.

For this reason, as much as a stranger is caressed while his views and intentions are only those of a mere traveller, so much he becomes an object of jealousy when they are discovered to be of a different nature: for with all their expressions of esteem, and readiness to serve, wherein they so superlatively abound, we must always allow  
a salvo,

a salvo, that nothing is to be required of them which may tend, in any shape, to set us on any other footing than that of sojourners and aliens.

In this respect the inhospitality of the French government is such that on the death of a foreigner, his effects according to law become the king's property. This they call *droit d'aubaine*, which, without falsifying the sense, may justly be translated, a right to plunder. It is somewhat surprizing, that at the conclusion of our many successful wars with France, the existence of such a tyrannical and barbarous practice should have slipped the memory of our negociators. The profits thence accruing to the crown, are in their nature so shameful and iniquitous, that it cannot be imagined a king would, on a proper representation, hesitate in abolishing so ignominious a custom. Though not rigorously enforced, it often occasions much disquietude.

While

While a foreign gentleman abstains from attempts that may interfere with their own pursuits of preferment, the French people of fashion are uncommonly desirous of impressing strangers with a favourable idea of their character, by shewing them civilities and contributing to their amusement and diversion. Foreigners of merit seldom fail of meeting with a reception and treatment adequate to their expectations. By such means the French obtain the good opinion of travellers, and leave in their minds that pleasing remembrance of their country, which induces them to mention France in a style that incites others to visit a nation where strangers are so agreeably entertained.

It has already been observed, that wit and learning are infallible introducers to genteel society in France. Men of eminent parts are sought for and honoured in the most brilliant companies. This is a truth not more experienced by individuals of  
 established



established reputation among the natives than by those who come from abroad. This proves highly to the credit of the French, that whatever political differences may subsist between them and other nations, they have impartiality enough to lay them aside in favour of distinguished merit ; and are amply endowed with that liberality of mind which considers all mankind as one people in the republic of letters.

Men of abilities, who have lived in France, are unanimous in bearing this testimony to the generality of the French : and in expressing their gratitude for the notice taken of them, not seldom superior to that they meet with among their own countrymen.

A French gentleman who had resided a long time in England, and was perfectly conversant in our ways and notions, used often to say, that Pope never wrote truer lines than those wherein he speaks of the estate which wits inherit after death,  
fame

fame and applause : a recompence which, in his apprehension, was rarely paid in England to a living author ; who commonly passes his days in the most mortifying obscurity ; but to make him some amends, as soon as he is dead, receives every kind of honour that can be shewn to his remains. *On le neglige durant sa vie, mais on l'enterre à Westminster :* he is neglected during life, but he is buried in Westminster-Abbey.

There may be some truth in the strictures of this Frenchman, yet his ill humour might probably arise from disappointments in his own views, and from not having met with the rewards he thought fairly due to his merits. Most certainly his representation of things is exaggerated ; there being few, if any, votaries of literature in England of acknowledged abilities who have cause to complain of the severity of their fate, while they act with that prudence and good conduct

duct without which no condition can prosper.

Sciences, literature, and every branch of ingenuity, are unquestionably held in the highest repute among the English: and though possibly their professors may not boast of so familiar an admittance among the great, as is usual in France, yet on the whole it may be confidently affirmed, that the profits arising from the exertion of wit and genius are not inferior to what they are in that kingdom.

The reason why men of letters are not, perhaps, so much sought after by our great people is deducible from the nature of our government. Its republican principles inspire the proprietors of great estates with such notions of their importance as are perpetually stimulating them to an exercise of it, which is incompatible with an indulgence in those amusements that employ so considerable a portion of the time of the French nobility. They have more leisure for the *noctes cœnæque Deum*.

Whereas

Whereas our grandees are continually immersed in intrigues of state, and consequently have not an equal share of attention to bestow on those avocations that are so dear to men of fortune in France.

Another, and perhaps the principal reason is, that most of the pastimes of the great in England are of such a nature, and so conducted, that no person can engage in them who is not possessed of affluence; not to forget, at the same time, that their diversions are often intended as the means and opportunities of carrying on their political schemes.

## C H A P. XVI.

*On French Compliments—English Plainness—Characters of the French and English Commonalty—French Shopkeepers—Merchants—Bourgeois.*

ONE of the inconveniences attending a plain English gentleman in France, is that round of compliments wherein he  
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is perfectly bewildered. He is like a town besieged, and deficient in ammunition: for he is so *accablé*, as they well call it, that is, so overwhelmed with verbal civilities, on all sides, that he finds himself quite at a loss how to make head, as it were, and give them sufficient returns.

The French language is, indeed, most admirably calculated for these purposes. It has an easy flow, and is abundantly furnished with complimentary phrases, which to the natives must have something bewitching in the sound. One hardly knows sometimes what motive to assign for their using them so copiously and repeatedly, but the sole pleasure of hearing them.

Without incurring the accusation of moroseness, well may an Englishman vent his spleen at such an abuse of speech. Well may so insipid a rotation of unmeaning terms prove equally tiresome and vexatious, when we advert to their endless impertinent intrusion upon all  
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subjects ; and how much they contribute to make people substitute politeness in the place of truth.

It was the praise of our ancestors, at the beginning of last century, that they still retained the downrightness and simplicity of the primitive ages, and knew not how, or rather would not, according to the testimony of a cotemporary author *descendere ad verba imaginariæ servitutis quæ istorum sæculorum blandities invenit*, "con- descend to make use of the servile phrases of false breeding, invented by modern flattery." Their spirit was too great for a submission to that intercourse of falshood and adulation which false breeding was introducing every where.

That praise still remains in a great measure well founded. It must afford real satisfaction to all Englishmen, who have sense enough to set a proper value on it, that a late traveller in our island, Pollnitz, who was unquestionably a man of judgment, takes an approving notice of the

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contempt mere complimenters are held in among us, and how little we esteem that studied, or rather affected style of behaviour so much in vogue in other countries. Those insignificant expressions wherewith discourse is so heavily loaded, considered in a serious light, are at best but expletives to eke out an insipid strain of speech, though they may as often be rightly termed the mean effusions of fashionable deceit.

Notwithstanding all this parade of high flown phrases, common to all ranks and professions in France, we must not imagine the French deficient in sincerity, and its collateral virtues; but rather look upon them in the light of a people whom an imitation of a modish folly renders much more ridiculous than perverse.

Courtiers (who are much the same in all countries) and persons in public stations are, in a manner, necessitated to put on the appearance of a readiness to oblige, and be subservient to all with whom they have  
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any concerns: such characters excepted, France abounds in men of candour and ingenuouſneſs. The commonalty, throughout moſt of the provinces, are a plain, downright generation, much leſs *ruſé*, ſharp and cunning, than the ordinary run of our country people in England. From this definition, however, we ſhould except the inhabitants of Normandy, who may, on the other hand, not unaptly be compared with our Yorkſhiremen, uſually reputed the moſt acute of the Engliſh, as the Normans are of the French.

Our Engliſh commonalty, though far from wanting in openneſs of temper and honeſty, have perhaps as little claim as any people to what is commonly meant by ſimplicity. Plainneſs they have; but that and ſimplicity are two very different things. The firſt relates purely to manners; ours are plain and unaffected: but the ſecond relates to the frame of mind, and implies inexperience in the ways of the world, and ſubſerviency to the notions



of others; attributes not very applicable to any class of Englishmen.

From this commendation of downrightness given to the majority of the French country people, and no less justly due to numbers in other situations of life, there is one remarkable exception, which ought carefully to be remembered by all foreigners; by English travellers particularly, whose purses, through the forgetfulness of it, are most liable to suffer, as they are the mark principally aimed at by such as make it their business to cozen and over-reach. This exception is largely found among those who bear the name of *marchands*, shopkeepers, who are not a whit preferable in point of unfair dealing, or rather absolute and shameless imposition, to the very dregs of our populace at Billingsgate. They will, with the coolest effrontery, ask ten times the worth of their merchandise, and back their assertions of its goodness and propriety of price with the most unconscientious prostitution

stitution of their character, if people of such a stamp can pretend to any. Were we to apply the *Punica fides* to any set of men, none deserve it more than these French shopkeepers.

Hence it may be that they in France, who exercise what we call merchandise in England, conscious of the ignominy affixed to the word *marchands*, from the base practices of those who bear it, have chosen to distinguish themselves by a more honourable title, and are known by that of *negocians*, while that of *marchands* is restricted to shopkeepers only.

The French merchants are a very respectable and worthy class of men, no ways inferior to our own. They differ from them however in several instances; in nothing more than the prodigious hurry so many of them are in to exchange that sphere of life for, what may be called the hobby-horse of every Frenchman, the rank and privileges of a noble. These may be purchased at no very high rate, if

the various informations one daily meets with may be depended on. There are also sundry saleable employments that confer the right of *nobleſſe*; but one of the moſt uſual methods of initiation into that body, is by purchaſing what they call the place of a *grand ſecrtaire du roi, maiſon, couronne de France*, grand ſecretary to the king, houſe, and crown of France. This indeed is a Rowland for one's Oliver, if *vox & præterea nihil*, high and mighty words without any meaning, can counterbalance a round ſum of money.

A Frenchman however is completely ſatiſfied with ſuch a bargain; which, as the prætor's rod emancipated a ſlave among the ancient Romans, frees a man from that vulgar appellation *bourgeois*, ſo hateful to the ears of a modern Frenchman.

*Bourgeois* is a term of reproach, which every man is ſure to hear, who is daring enough to enter the liſts of altercation with any one that thinks himſelf by birth or office ſecured againſt the retortion.

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And yet the meaning of it is no other, strictly speaking, than that of a burges, or citizen. But whereas no man in this island of liberty deems himself disgraced by being so called, in France it is quite otherwise. One may always perceive a consciousness of inferiority in the tone and accent of those who acknowledge themselves members of that little revered fraternity.

Cit, with us, is rather used in a jocular sense than as a degradation; but whenever the word *bourgeois* is in the mouth of a French gentleman, it is always intended as a stigma, and never understood but as an expression of contempt; unless in legal processes, political discussions, or formal transactions, wherein it appears in its proper genuine signification of those classes of the community that are below the rank of nobles.



## C H A P. XVII.

*On the Flattery of the French—Their Pretensions to Superior Breeding—Taste—Polite Knowledge.*

**F**ROM the complimentary disposition of the French, an excessive addiction to flattery reigns universally among them.

To please in conversation is the first rule of politeness a man of education is taught in France. An adherence to this is inculcated in preference to all considerations. Conformably to this maxim, his aim, in speaking, is usually much more to say what may prove acceptable, than what is fit and proper for the occasion; the coming at the truth of things not being, in his opinion, a merit equal to that of procuring the satisfaction of those he converses with.

This is the basis of that urbanity (as they term it) prevailing so superiorly in France; which, in the conception of every

every Frenchman, is the fountain from whence good-breeding is communicated to other parts. The progressive diffusion of politeness over the face of Europe, during the two last centuries, is unquestionably due, say they, to the concourse of the better sort of foreigners in their country; conscious of their national deficiency in this point, they have, time out of mind, made it a rule to pay frequent visits to France, in order to acquire and preserve that politeness of behaviour and courteousness of style and address, with which the savage rudeness of other nations is totally unacquainted.

These pretensions, bold and presumptuous as they are esteemed by all judicious strangers, are of long standing in France. Before the celebrated æra of Lewis the Fourteenth, which the French imagine, and firmly believe the whole European world imagines with them, to be the noblest and most illustrious epocha ever known (far above the Augustan age);  
before

before this time, even so remotely as the commencement of the reign of Lewis the Thirteenth, a Frenchman, in a summary description of the world, written in Latin, has these remarkable words concerning his country and countrymen: *Huc, tanquam in veram humanitatis scholam, mittitur quotannis ex omnibus orbis partibus, selecta nobilitas, ut cum lingua civilem vivendi modum, posita Barbaria, addiscat:*" Hither, as to the school of true politeness, the flower of the foreign nobility is yearly sent from all parts of the world, in order, together with its language, to learn good manners, and divest themselves of their native barbarity."

That spirit of self-adulation and conceit, of which every nation has its measure, is no where found in a larger proportion than in France, where the natives are ever congratulating themselves, both in their discourses and writings, on having the honour and felicity of being considered as the models of all their neighbours

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in the cultivation and refinement of arts.

This humour prevailed not less in the days of the afore-cited writer than it does at present; as amply appears by the fulsome praises he lavishes on his countrymen, and the superiority of genius and talents he so confidently ascribes to them in the sequel of his performance.

His extravagant encomiums, however, only prove how ignorant he was, or affected to be, of the cotemporary state of learning and improvements in other countries: in which latter case nothing can exceed the impertinence and partiality he is guilty of, in exalting France above all the rest of Europe, in so decisive, so shameless, and so unjustifiable a manner.

Notwithstanding the magnificent description that writer gives of the transcendant, incomparable merit of the French nation at that time, an Englishman may call his authority in question, and facts will furnish him with arguments to prove, that England was at that period the land  
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of politeness and arts, which were daily advancing to perfection under the guidance of a Jonson, a Fletcher, a Shakespeare, a Spenser, a Raleigh, a Knowles, a Bacon, and many others whom it were needless to mention. These flourished in the latter time of Queen Elizabeth, the reign of James the First, and the beginning of that of Charles, the period precisely which this arrogant Frenchman marks as so honourable to France, and so ignominious to its neighbours. The civil troubles, which broke out afterwards in England, were the sole impediment that stopt the career of our domestic improvements; it was natural that, fierce and cruel as they were, they should plunge us, during a series of years, into an oblivion of the gentler pursuits of life.

Time is required to emerge from the gloominess of mind contracted by sanguinary disputes. The French were much longer in reviving from the miseries occasioned by their civil wars in the sixteenth

teenth century, than the English were in recovering from the calamities arising from their intestine feuds in the last.

But to obviate the imputation of partiality (of which this Frenchman is so deservedly accused), let us appeal to the authority of foreigners, whose verdict in such a case will doubtless be deemed unbiassed, and therefore entirely worthy of credit.

If we consult a performance not unknown to this century, and highly esteemed in the last, the Geography of Cluverius, we shall find that, speaking of our countrymen during those times, he pays them the particular compliment of passing for the most improved and accomplished nation then existent. He does not affirm it from his own personal estimation of the fact, but as a truth universally assented to: his expression is clear and decisive, *nunc Angli omnium delicatissimi perhibenter*; "the English now, says he, are accounted the most refined of all people."

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We may draw still nearer to our own times, and cite the opinion of Voltaire in his earlier days; a gentleman who, in more instances than one, betrays no inclination to allow us any more than our due, and even hardly that. They who have read his Letters on the English Nation, may remember that he himself acknowledges we led the way in polishing the stage, incomparably the most liberal and polite of all entertainments. From hence alone may be inferred that we were well acquainted with genteel life, and its concomitant elegancies, before the French, who followed us at the distance of many years, in bringing their theatre to any degree of decency and toleration. Rotrou first began, and, like Æschylus among the Greeks, shewed his countrymen the dawn of dramatic taste. But Rotrou did not appear till long after Shakspeare was laid in his grave; and none of that French poet's plays are now ever exhibited; while, on the contrary, almost every one of

of Shakspeare's is represented to crowded audiences, whose admiration of them rather increases than diminishes, in spite of French criticisms. So true it is that, as Cicero emphatically says, *opinionum commenta delet dies veritatis judicia confirmat*, "Opinions last but a while, truth lives for ever."

The reciprocal vein of flattery, for which the French are so reprehensible, is partly derived from the nature of their government. In absolute monarchies, as all things depend on the sole command and inclinations of one person, they who are near him will of course conform to whatever seems best in his eyes, in order to acquire his favour, the only means they have to render themselves considerable. To these no less court must, in their turn, be paid by all who aim at advancement. So that flattery will gradually pervade all ranks, and generous, manly frankness of speech, will retire to the circle of a few, whose characters will be noted for blunt,  
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uncouth, old-fashioned, and not qualified to mix with well-bred people.

But when to the force of political considerations is added the weight of those habits and notions implanted by education; the influence of which becomes a second nature, it is not surprising that, bred in a perpetual strain of reciprocal complaisance, which forbids the admission of any disagreeable truth, the French should imperceptibly lose sight of any other precept but that of pleasing, and look on the practice of that alone, as the proof and criterion of gentility and elegance in verbal intercourse.

A man who dares in France to manifest his real thoughts, and stem the torrent of complimentary falsehood that so shamefully deluges the most ordinary transactions, will immediately be branded with the appellation of *mal appris*, ill-bred. Should his station in life be that of a gentleman, and his conduct otherwise irreproachable, he may perhaps escape  
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the former term (which is rather harsh and injurious) but he will infallibly be singled out for a *misanthrope*, an epithet which, among the French, signifies a hater of polite behaviour, and a sayer of disagreeable things; a troublesome guest improper to be admitted into civil company, and fit only to enjoy the impertinence of his thoughts in solitude.

Such are the ideas the French affix to the word *misanthrope*, a being so superlatively disgustful to the temper of that nation, that Moliere, in the best comedy he ever wrote (and as good a one as ever was written), brings him on the stage with an intent to expose and punish him. But mark the force of truth: he whom the poet lashes and condemns as faulty, is the very person whom the spectators most admire and venerate, insomuch that it is a well known anecdote, that the duke of Montausier, the most honest man at court, used to say, *Plut à Dieu que je ressemblassé au misanthrope de Moliere!* "Would to God

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I were like the misanthrope of Moliere !” These circumstances strongly prove, that however disagreeable a person may become in French companies by adhering to downrightness, and professing a contempt of servility and adulation, yet such a character, in the nature of things, remains not only laudable in itself, but even acceptable to all who are not within the compass of its exertion.

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. C H A P. XVIII.

*On French Parasites—Open Tables frequent among the  
Opulent—Gaiety of the French Literati.*

**T**HE French are particularly fond of anecdotes that relate to the private transactions in families ; a kind of knowledge in which they who are conversant in France are sure of a most ready welcome in all companies.

There are persons whose subsistence in a manner arises from their expertness in

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unravelling that clue of mysterious behaviour which close and covert people are so prone to affect. One who is thoroughly versed in this art is allowed to *connoître le monde*, "to know the world well." Now this connoisseur of the world is generally a person *desœuvré*, as the French rightly call it, one whose time is perfectly his own, and who may sacrifice it to the most frivolous purposes: such as sauntering from place to place all the morning, in order to pick up a fund of information and scandal, sufficient to defray the charge of a dinner somewhere.

Numbers of the fashionable and the opulent make it a rule to keep a sort of open table for a particular set of acquaintance; among whom some of these *desœuvrés* have the good luck to be constantly found, as it is one of the necessary appendages of these public tables, never to be wanting in this kind of furniture; they being commonly the ambulating chronicle of the times, the repertory



where all that science is deposited, which consists of the trifling incidents and defamatory passages of the day.

People of this stamp are very numerous in Paris, a city abounding more in idlers than any capital in Europe. This is owing to the innumerable swarms of ecclesiastics and officers, whom indigence and hopes of preferment draw hither from every province of the realm. Most of them continue long out of employment, and being thereby driven to depend on the bounty of others for a maintenance, must endeavour to recommend themselves by such qualifications as their respective patrons testify a liking to; among which it not seldom happens, that some are required of no very honourable a texture.

Without intending to depreciate our English nobility and gentry, whose munificence and generosity on proper occasions are unquestionable, it may be affirmed there is a richer fund of convivial hospitality among the French. Though it affords

fords an ampler field for parasites and flatterers, yet it furnishes, at the same time, a necessary encouragement and relief to many, whose situation in life, though decent, is not attended with those substantial comforts that affluence only can procure.

This beneficial display of opulence may be justly deemed in many a compliance with an established mode, in order to obtain the reputation of being men of prime figure. But then it is an ostentation of so useful and salutary a nature, that if pride may be tolerated on any account, he is certainly the most excuseable, who is proud of employing his wealth in the hospitable treatment of his acquaintance. The majority of those who by their obsequiousness ingratiate themselves with the great, may not be much deserving of their notice; yet there are many undoubtedly whose real worth amply intitles them to the civilities they receive.

Censorious travellers have, on the other hand, laboured to take away all kind of merit from this custom, by representing it as a sort of national rabies, like that of Newmarket in England. But they who argue in so partial a manner, forget that the former of these fashions is often of great utility; that, when conducted with any degree of prudence, it never proves essentially detrimental; and that it is the least unbecoming of any of those foibles to which men of fortune and birth are liable: while, on the contrary, it is unanimously agreed, as well by ourselves as by all sensible foreigners, that Newmarket is a scene of fatal and disgraceful transactions to many of the first personages in the nation; and one of the most pernicious amusements permitted in this country, for reasons which any body can assign.

This passion for convivial hospitality is likewise not a little owing to the mirthful disposition of the French literati; a class of men who delight in giving birth  
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to, and encouraging elegant mirth. Here-  
in no individuals in France are more ex-  
pert and assisting. It is principally this  
good humour in themselves, and aptness  
to promote it in others, that secures them  
so agreeable a reception every where.

The *toujours gay* accompanies them,  
one may say, from *Parnassus* to the *Lyceum*;  
and they handle no subject whatever with  
an air of solemnity. As they are utter  
strangers to that pedantic deportment, and  
heaviness of conversation, which so fre-  
quently excludes men of letters, in other  
countries, from the participation of fes-  
tivity, they are admitted with readiness  
into the most jovial companies. To the  
stock of information and knowledge  
which education and study bestow, they  
have the happy dexterity of adding that  
national store of chearfulness and vivacity  
which enlivens all they say, and gives  
a turn of sprightliness and jocundity to  
the most weighty and serious subjects.



It is, therefore, no matter of surprize if persons of the highest rank and fashion, far from being averse to the admission of them at their tables, should, on the contrary, court their company; and in their cards of invitation to the other guests carefully specify their names, and *faire* *fate*, as they express it, previously exult in the pleasure they promise them, and themselves, from the enjoyment of such company.

To be courted in the gay and fashionable world is the peculiar felicity of men of learning and genius in France more than in any country. In England, as already observed, unless their talents can be made subservient to political drudgery, they are seldom in request among the great.

## C H A P. XIX.

*On the Friendliness and Munificence of many Persons in France.*

**F**OREIGNERS are apt sometimes to tax the French with insincerity in their appearances of friendliness: but they who think the French deficient in this essential requisite to the happiness of mankind, betray a very little knowledge of, and acquaintance with, their real character and disposition.

It may be questioned, whether there are not more frequent instances, and greater exertions of private beneficence among them than among us: for which, beside a variety of reasons, this one in particular may be assigned, that independence is much less known in that country than in ours.

In England, the great object in the views and wishes of all, is personal independence in its fullest latitude. This is so true that  
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it is almost a constant rule for the very dregs of the English populace, in their quarrels, to tell their antagonists, with uncommon emphasis and exultation, *you can't say I owe you any thing*: a noble pride that cannot be too much encouraged, as the shame annexed to the being dependent is the strongest and most powerful of all incitements to industry, that main source of the happiness and well-being of a people.

So much is the fame and reputation of individuals rated among us, according to the measure of independence they have the good fortune to acquire, that it is the chief boast and glory of all who can attain it. They who are not blest with this advantage are still desirous to appear possessors of some share of it.

The generality of the English are very little prone to submit to dependence on others, however easy the terms may be. When by the common rule of nature, which, in some degree, renders all men sub-

subservient to each other, they are obliged to have recourse for aid, it is with an ill grace. No nation, it has been observed, understands less than we do the arts of procuring help and protection; owing to that spirit of uncontroul which prompts those whom it governs even to aspire at a freedom from every kind of obligation whatever.

This passion for independence is so conspicuous in the natives of this island, that it was not without some appearance of reason Voltaire, in speaking of the Reformation, seems to attribute the favourable reception and establishment of it in England to those principles of absolute independence on the dictates of others, whereon its doctrines are founded; a fondness for which, he asserts, nature has implanted in the very temper of the English nation.

This notion is prevalent in Roman Catholic countries: nor is it surprising that they whose religious tenets will not suffer them



them to account for that great event in a manner more honourable to the dissenters from the church of Rome, should assign such other causes for it as are specious and plausible : but Protestants have a right to contend that the Reformation is chiefly to be ascribed to the superior good sense and discernment of that part of Christendom which embraced it. These motives were alone sufficient to secure it a favourable reception in England, exclusive of those peculiarities in our character to which they impute it. They should lay less stress upon them when it is considered that the subjects of some other governments, who were equally forward in promoting that salutary work, neither were at that time nor have been since remarkable for this spirit of uncontroul so much insisted upon in the English nation.

Poverty is an evil very much diffused in France. As there is not such a profusion, if one may so term it, of public national charity there, as in England, the  
poorer

poorer sort are greatly dependant on the rich; who, on the other hand, are very far from being wanting in humanity and acts of benevolence to their indigent neighbours.

But what is principally understood here by friendliness, is that readiness and alacrity among persons in affluence, or even in no more than easy circumstances, to contribute to the welfare of those whose means are insufficient to put them forward in the world.

One third, perhaps, of the youth educated in colleges and seminaries, owe their maintenance and support in these places to the kindness and munificence of some generous patron. This undoubtedly is real beneficence. It enables a man not only to stand upon his own ground, and depend solely on his diligence and capacity, but to raise himself, in no long course of time, to the same level of consideration with his benefactor: as it often happens that many who have begun the  
world

world in this manner, have met with the most rapid advancement, and in the zenith of life have become men of great importance.

It were more advantageous, however, for the nation in general, if this exercise of private generosity, which is very extensive, was more properly directed. From motives of ill understood piety, many of these worthy friends to society are led to think they cannot fix a man in a situation more acceptable to the Deity, and consequently more beneficial to himself, than that wherein he is dedicated to the more immediate service of heaven, by consecrating his labours to the cause of religion.

This is one of the reasons why France is peopled with such a superfluity of secular and regular clergymen. Many of them, indeed, embrace that form of life from a total inability to pursue any other course. When a man has attained to years of maturity, and the most precious portion

portion of his time, that which ought to have been employed in qualifying him for a vocation suitable to his temper and inclination, is irretrievably elapsed, no remedy can eradicate that fatal malady, an aversion to manual labour, or what is esteemed illiberal employment. It is a necessary consequence of the long habit of buoying up the mind with immoderate expectations of becoming considerable in what we have been early taught to look upon as a more creditable condition.

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## C H A P. XX.

*On the Encouragement of Learning in France, during the Reign of Lewis the Fourteenth—Politics of that Kingdom—England—And other Countries at that Time.*

**T**HE French clergy may justly be reputed a very learned body in every province of literature and science; it has produced men of the greatest merit and abilities.

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To them it is greatly owing that learning flourishes so diffusively in France. The reign of Lewis the Fourteenth acquired no inconsiderable share of its lustre from the many distinguished personages who abounded among them.

When we cast our eyes on that celebrated age, we must acknowledge it to have been amazingly fertile in men of the most profound, as well as the most useful capacities. It was a happy æra for the improvement of the human understanding, and of all those arts that embellish nature and render life delightful. As notwithstanding the many wars in which the ambition of that prince engaged him, domestic tranquillity was settled on a strong and lasting foundation, the natives had full leisure and opportunity to emerge entirely from the ignorance and barbarity of former times, arising as much from intestine feuds, as deficiency of encouragement to men of genius. The first of these, indeed, generally produces the last, and seasons

sons of internal quiet only are favourable to intellectual prosecutions.

This epocha was equally remarkable in England as in France; the emulation of both nations keeping time, as it were, and stimulating them to use their utmost efforts not to be surpassed in this reciprocal strife for superiority of renown.

These illustrious rivals were just then recovering from a state almost of anarchy. They had for years experienced all the horrors of civil confusion, and had felt the most dire effects of factious animosity and rage, when, through the suppression of parties in France, and the weariness rather than the extinction of them in England, peace happily revisited both nations at home. This auspicious event revived a spirit which had lain dormant, and now recovering double strength, from a long duration of rest, roused and exerted itself, like a man who has been thoroughly refreshed, and resumes his business with a new supply of vigour.

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The whole range of knowledge and literature was subjected to the most indefatigable investigation; and names that will be handed down to the latest times, adorned their annals in the brightest profusion.

The commencement of this splendid period may be dated from the peace of the Pyrenees, and may be said to have terminated about the twentieth year of the present century; when the South Sea projects in England, and the Mississippi schemes in France, with other monsters of infatuation, produced such a chaos in the minds of men as posterity will hardly believe. For a considerable space of time, it unhinged the common ideas of reason, and involved not only these, but sundry other nations in the wildest and most absurd pursuits that ever disgraced the human understanding.

The afore-mentioned period produced not only the sublimest works of learning and of genius, but was equally replete with

with statesmen and heroes. The noblest and most beneficial undertakings were framed and executed, and many of the most signal military feats atchieved, that ever graced the councils or arms of either nation.

But the felicity of England preponderated in the scale of comparison with that of France. For a while, it is true, the latter seemed to shine with superior lustre : but the radical defect of a bad constitution soon overturned that structure of national grandeur, which the abilities of the great Colbert had so successfully planned and erected. Before he left the stage, he had the mortification to perceive he had laboured in vain. His comprehensive mind foresaw, that in a government like that of France, and under such a king as his master, the mighty things he had compassed would shortly be undone.

Far different was the fate of England. While France lay at the mercy of the worst administrations, eager and triumphant, as



it were, in prosecuting the worst maxims that could be adopted, and turning the whole kingdom into one stupendous scene of tyranny and persecution, the spirit of equity and moderation was dictating, in England, those wise and salutary measures, in civil and religious matters, that laid the foundation of our subsequent prosperity. At home, the Revolution, and its fortunate consequence, the Act of Settlement, calmed and pacified the apprehensions of a people long threatened with a subversion of their liberties, and a reduction to that state of servitude, which their misled sovereigns were incited by the flattery of prostitute courtiers, to look upon as the proper condition for subjects.

Add to this the generous toleration and freedom of opinion and conscience granted with not more justice than sound policy. In the lapse of a few years, by gradually lessening the asperity with which an outrageous warmth for particular modes of worship, induced zealots to treat such as dissented

dissented from them, it connected the generality of men in that fundamental principle of all social happiness, a reciprocal forbearance of enmity and dislike on account of a disparity in spiritual tenets.

These domestic blessings, highly valuable in themselves, were enhanced by the prospect of the calamities so many of our neighbours were groaning under, through a reverse of conduct in their rulers. It seemed as if most of the European princes of those days, had determined to try how far they might extend their arbitrary claims over their people; and these, on the other hand, did not appear unwilling to countenance, by their passiveness on all emergencies, the most extravagant pretensions of sovereignty.

In the very dawn of the period we are describing, Denmark had set a precedent unheard of in any civilised nation, by a formal, voluntary surrender of its liberty into the hands of its monarch. This slavish spirit became in a manner contagi-

ous: it communicated itself to Sweden, where Charles the Eleventh, a prince equally daring and ambitious, lost no opportunity of imitating his Danish neighbour, and found means to arrive at a degree of power, unknown in that kingdom, since the expulsion of its tyrant Christiern by the great Gustavus Vasa.

In the south of Europe, not only France, as already observed, had lost all traces of its former liberty, but even Portugal, a country just freed from the Spanish yoke, through the united bravery and conduct of all classes, had not spirit enough to complete its deliverance. This it might easily have done by establishing the constitution on an equitable basis, and limiting the influence and prerogatives of a prince, who was the king of their choice, and held his diadem, as it were, from their courtesy.

In the more distant and less noticed regions of Christendom, the like systems prevailed, and were even productive of greater

greater evils, as they who were the sufferers did not tamely bow the neck to subjection, but shewed, by the length and intrepidity of their resistance, that they were worthy of a better fate. This testimony is amply due to that brave, but unfortunate people, the Hungarians. The zeal and courage wherewith they struggled against oppression, were never exceeded, and no nation was ever more cruelly dealt with by its oppressors.

When we reflect therefore on the situation of Europe in those days, it will be acknowledged we had sufficient reason to congratulate ourselves on the exemption from so many dreadful evils, and to be peculiarly strenuous and active in preventing their introduction into this island.

It may not however be presumptuous, to insinuate that we were not altogether undeserving of this felicity. The generous reception of the persecuted protestants, who fled hither in such multitudes from France, the part we acted on the po-



litical stage of Europe, in espousing the cause of its ill-treated and injured princes and states, against the unjust enterprizes and designs of that crown: these were measures that redounded to our greatest honour, as they indicated the wisdom that inspired the councils of this nation.

The impartiality and disinterestedness of our conduct were amply manifested during the continuance of that triumphant war at the opening of this century, wherein the valour of our troops, the skill of our commanders, and the ability, and what is much more the integrity of our ministers, excited the wonder, and secured the confidence and respect, not only of our allies, but even of our enemies. In the conclusion of those hostilities that had so long desolated the face of Europe, through untimely divisions among ourselves, we lost the opportunity of humbling for ever the only foe this nation has to fear; yet it must not be forgot, that, in the midst of their misconduct, our negociators did not  
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lose sight of that magnanimity which had been the ruling principle of our national proceedings. Notwithstanding many concessions were made that justly render their memory odious, they displayed a manly firmness in those demands wherein the interests of humanity were concerned.

This encomium is due to the generous care taken of the distressed protestants in France, at the treaty of Utrecht; wherein provision was made for the release and security from imprisonment and persecution of such as were suffering merely for their religion. Happily for them (so powerfully was the dread of our enmity impress on the mind of their king) that he consented to what in a more prosperous situation of his affairs, his haughtiness and bigotry would have equally concurred in rejecting with the utmost disdain.

This transaction, so truly honourable to the English nation, Voltaire, in his Age of Lewis the Fourteenth, is so forcibly struck with, that he could not forbear making  
mention

mention of it in such terms as do credit to his feelings, and prove his regard for the welfare of mankind. *C'etoit (says he) dicter des loix, mais des loix bien respectables.* "This was prescribing laws, but they were laws deserving of the highest respect."

Happy! had they who were at the head of this nation, in that important crisis, acted with the same inflexibility in other instances. Our successes in war intitled us to all reasonable concessions from a vanquished enemy: the safety of Europe, the peculiar interest of England, required the completest humiliation of France: and the facility wherewith they might have obtained the highest advantages for every part of the confederacy, rendered their neglect to avail themselves of so favourable an opportunity to serve the common cause unpardonably criminal; the more, indeed, as had the foe been in the same circumstances of superiority, it is more than probable he would have improved them to the utmost. This appears  
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by the dexterity he manifested in extricating himself from the most mortifying and most insuperable difficulties, in spite of his exhausted condition.

Notwithstanding the insufficiency of the advantages procured by the terms of peace, the height of military reputation we had acquired by sea and land, and the fame of our national probity, were ample motives to enforce the reverence of our neighbours. We continued accordingly the umpires of Europe for a long series of years. The uprightness of our political measures endeared our government to all the unambitious part of the world, and procured us unbounded esteem and confidence.

But the most profitable of the many useful lessons to be learned from the variety of remarkable events this period affords, is the striking disparity of fortune attending the English and French nations. While Lewis the Fourteenth suffered himself to be governed by men of solid under-



standing and experience, his kingdom bid fair to arrive in time at the most eminent degree of internal prosperity. Trade, commerce, and manufactures made a flourishing figure, and were beginning to render the power and resources of France more alarmingly great and formidable than ever.

But the insatiable ambition and the superstitious infatuation of that monarch soon altered the scene. His continual wars depopulated his realm, and drained his treasures; and his expulsion of the Protestants gave the finishing blow to his greatness. To this last measure may be chiefly attributed the weakness and debility that France experienced shortly after. It was a signal contrast to the commencement of a reign which had been accompanied with so much splendour.

While the strength of France decreased that of England augmented, not only through its own improvements, but by the loss its rival sustained in the flight of those

those innumerable multitudes that took shelter under our protection, and brought over with them such an accession of industry and ingenuity to the large fund already possessed by this nation.

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## CH A P. XXI.

*Continuation of the Article of Learning.*

**A**MONG the many improvements due to the superior taste and discernment of that famous æra, we ought not to omit the progress made in that useful branch of knowledge, the enlarged and comprehensive view of the public interests of mankind, which began about this time to make a necessary part of the literary qualifications of a gentleman. They, indeed, who had so long neglected to make their studies subservient to this end, paid knowledge a poor compliment, and little knew wherein its most essential utility consisted.

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The name of a scholar began henceforward to mean something more than a mere dealer in books and languages. Antiquity was no longer ransacked for the sole sake of useless curiosity. It was considered and consulted as the collected wisdom of years, and was now produced on the scene of action, as we recall from his retreat an ancient venerable counsellor, in order to be directed by his experience.

Such was the beneficial spirit of inquiry and research that took place of the laborious and fruitless drudgery which had, for near two centuries, blunted the capacity of the literati, and employed them in an exercise of their faculties as needless and tedious to themselves as unprofitable to others.

In the mean time experimental philosophy, of which Bacon had laid the foundation in England, and Galileo introduced into Italy, was carried to a perfection, of which former ages had no idea, by the noble institutions of the Royal Society  
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here, and the Academy of Sciences in France. Moral and intellectual philosophy (if one may use the expression) were cultivated with no less brilliant success; and the polite arts never in any nation boasted more numerous and more skilful professors.

In those enlightened days the university of Paris assumed a new face. And from being the seat of pedantry, and of scholastic impertinence and absurdity, became a seminary of real erudition.

The French nobility, too, from being rude and nearly Gothic in their manner of living, took another turn, and became the admirers and protectors of the Muses: a fashion which, instead of diminishing, has rather increased since that time. A French gentleman would now be ashamed of appearing in that illiterate light wherein his prejudiced ancestors would have gloried, about the beginning of the seventeenth century; when through the sanguinary quarrels that had so long and so terribly



ribly agitated France, the spirit of learning (which since the reign of Francis the First, had diffused itself among the great) was nearly extinct, and a military roughness and ferocity had taken possession of their minds. This is a fact remarkably illustrated in the curious conversation reported by St. Evremont, between two elderly persons of quality in his time (the one a zealous advocate, the other a profest hater of literature) wherein the latter asserts, by way of boast, that in his youthful days (the period above mentioned) no gentlemen studied but such as were designed for the church: and concludes with this remarkable expression, *Du Latin! de mon tems, du Latin! un gentilhomme en eut été deshonoré.* "Latin! in my time, Latin! a gentleman would have thought it a disgrace."

Neither were we less forward in shaking off the rust and gloominess contracted during the reign of fanaticism. Notwithstanding it behoves every honest Englishman

lishman never to mention, without detestation, the name of Charles the Second, yet, with all his enormities, he had received from nature such a plentiful portion of wit and vivacity, as contributed not a little to rouse his subjects from that lethargic indolence and inattention to elegance and taste, which the horrid scenes they had long acted in, had almost obliterated from their ideas. Though luxury had its birth in his days, the increase of it should be attributed to the propensity of mankind to exceed the proper medium in all things. The manners of his court were rather profligate and licentious than unmanly and effeminate; witness the number of noblemen and gentlemen that were so ready to expose themselves to the dangers and hardships of war both by sea and by land.

The truth was, that having suffered much in a long course of the bloodiest dissensions, the nation was, for a time, hurried into a fit of boundless joy at seeing

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them

them concluded; like a man who, after having long been deprived of the comforts and pleasures of life, is apt on the return of prosperity to over-shoot the mark of moderation. Here it may be proper to observe, that an addiction to pastimes and pleasures which at that epocha was moderate, has grown of late years to a dangerous height among us. It is now become our boast, that no nation surpasses or even vies with us in the variety and costliness of our diversions and amusements. Weak-minded people have gone so far as to imagine that our superiority in such a contest was a proof of national grandeur and felicity; while it is no more, at best, than an argument of our opulence, and no less a one, at the same time, of our extravagance in the use of it.

The state of learning in France, is not inferior, at present, to what it was in the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth. Doubtless the merit of leading the way (a very great one) belongs to it in the fullest latitude:

titude: but that of perfecting seems the  
 peculiar characteristic of the present.  
 Eloquence and poetry were then, indeed,  
 on a more splendid footing than they have  
 been since; though both Crebillon and Vol-  
 taire are universally reputed not inferior  
 in their kind to the first-rate authors of  
 that time. But then experimental philo-  
 sophy and political knowledge have been  
 cultivated with the greatest success; the  
 latter especially is now arrived at that lustre  
 which no past ages ever saw. Montef-  
 quieu is a name of which the French may  
 boast with the best founded pride, if in-  
 deed such a man is not rather to be  
 deemed, what Voltaire so nobly says of  
 Newton, the property of all nations.



## C H A P. XXII.

*On French Esprit—Vivacity—and Mirth—their Notions  
of the English in these Particulars.*

THE French are of opinion they much excel us in the secondary branches of poetry, such as songs, pastorals, and other compositions of that sort. In epigrams it must be allowed we have no right to compare with them. Rousseau's particularly are truly admirable, so far as productions of that stamp can claim such an epithet. But if we are at the pains of looking over the divers collections of light poems in our language, we shall see no cause to subscribe to any assertion of our inferiority.

The French are of opinion they have by much the advantage of us in quickness of apprehension, and in perceiving objects in all the variety of lights of which they are susceptible. This uncommon readiness they possess more of, in their own conceit,

conceit, than any other people. But there is no occasion to make them so undisputed a concession of this claim as they imagine themselves intitled to.

They are continually, and it must be allowed not unsuccessfully, aiming at what they call *esprit*: but this may be better translated by vivacity of expression than wit. If we attend to the real character of many persons among them who pass for *gens d'esprit*, we shall find they are rather noted for sprightliness in their manner, than for what we understand by men of wit. This rather implies an elucidation of thought, by apt references and ingenious comparisons, than a brilliancy of speech derived from the choice of words alone. This liveliness of expression flows from warmth and impetuosity of imagination. These are often deficient in truth, which ought in strictness, to be the body of which wit is the soul, agreeably to the precept of their own best critic, *Rien n'est beau que le vrai*. Boileau.

It should not, however, be denied that this vivacity in discoursing, which characterises most of the French people of education, is generally very pleasing: the more so as it is not the result of affectation, but usually the native produce of the soil.

This qualification they are peculiarly careful to display, in order to make themselves agreeable to strangers.

The gaiety of their disposition is doubly exerted in their intercourse with us; as they are uncommonly delighted when they have been able *de rejouir un Anglois*, "to make an Englishman merry." They deem it a curiosity to see us laugh and sport; and when any of our countrymen happens to be gifted with a turn of temper similar to their own, they gaze at him as a *rara avis*, one whom a singular felicity has exempted from the depth of thoughtfulness and reverie annexed to our character.

Experience, however, proves that as chearful merry beings are to be found  
among

among the English, as among the French, or any nation; and in no small number: this may be easily verified by those who will be at the trouble of conversing among those classes in England where much scheming and plodding are not requisite. An impartial, attentive examiner will confess there is as much, if not often more, archness and humour among them than among individuals of the same condition in any country whatever.

There appears, indeed, a more constant and uniform vein of joviality in the temper of the French, inclining them to unbend their minds with more facility than we do: but, at the same time, we do not observe that a company of Englishmen met with a view of merriment are deficient in attaining that end.

What often deceives us into an ill-grounded persuasion that the French enjoy themselves more than we do, is the difference in expressing gladness and sa-



tisfaction peculiar to each nation, as well as to each individual. We that are, in general, more grave and serious, find more pleasure in the reciprocal communication of our thoughts. They, who are more airy in their disposition, are much more taken with that effusion of levity which denotes a mind free from the burden of much reflexion, as is mostly the case of the merriest sort of people.

These petulant indications and excesses of mirth so much more usual in France than in England, though they are an argument that the French, in common, do not employ their faculty of thinking so much as the English, prove not, however, that they are internally more happy.

The pleasure and felicity of the mind most certainly arise not from an absence of the graver ideas. This is unanswerably evinced by the consideration that the most solid, as well as most rational entertainments (those which sink deepest in the soul and dwell most satisfactorily in our

re-

remembrance) are precisely those wherein good sense and judgment are most appealed to. How superior, for example, to any other pastimes are those of the stage; and those which consist in the perusal of such works as the Spectators, and similar books equally delightful and instructive.

Should it, after all, be affirmed that the French give more frequent indications of joy than we do, this may readily be admitted. But whoever accurately observes the constitution of human nature, will not from thence conclude that they possess a greater share of real happiness, any more than a man is to be reputed the richer for making an ostentatious parade of his money. As the latter may have no great stock of what he is fond of displaying, so the former may appear to enjoy much more than in truth they experience.

However, to compromise matters, let us allow the French to be more willing to communicate their pleasure, and to partake

take of that which may be received by way of exchange ; and the English, on the other hand, to be satisfied with the enjoyment of their own, and less curious of participating in that of others.

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### C H A P. XXIII.

*On the French Ideas of Personal Graces—and of Dancing.*

**T**HE French are peculiarly attentive to the deportment of a man and to the frame of his person. These are more scrupulously weighed in France than any where ; no people being so precipitate in forming advantageous or unfavourable ideas of a person according to the impression these exterior circumstances have made. Hence the immense care taken in France of whatever relates to the outside of a man.

Gracefulness of behaviour and personal comeliness are of far greater value and

importance among the French than among the English: the latter especially, is an advantage of the first rate. Whether it is that not being so much indebted to nature in that particular as we are, the less it is common there the more it is desired: or whether they imagine it is of more consequence to promote advancements in life, than qualities less striking and obvious. But whatever the cause may be, *un bel homme*, "a handsome man," is an expression pronounced with much more apparent satisfaction among them by such as have some right to the appellation, and with an air denoting a much greater consciousness of its influence than is perceivable among the English. Though far from depreciated by these, it is allowed no more than its real worth, and viewed, as it should be, in the light of a fortunate casualty which neither adds to, nor detracts from the merit of the possessor.

Beauty and personal graces, with their concomitant advantages, are subjects much  
more



more frequently brought on the carpet among the French than among the English, who are, in general, but little inclined to pay much homage to the exterior gifts of nature.

And yet nothing is truer than that no inconsiderable share of notice is taken of, and respect shewn to, the English, in France, on this very account; it often proving the chief motive of their introduction to very agreeable acquaintance.

While the French are so sedulously intent on rendering their exterior acceptable, it is no wonder they should so severely censure the English for the neglect, not to say contempt, many of them profess for those attainments the drift of which is to improve our bodily perfections, or to supply our deficiencies in these respects by the rules and assistance of art.

Few in France above the vulgar are deficient in those qualifications that enable a man to make a figure in gay companies, and to bear a part in the fashionable modes  
of

of festivity. There is hardly any body among them of a genteel condition who is not able to acquit himself with dexterity in various kind of dances; whereas an Englishman thinks he has done enough, if he can walk a minuet, or make a partner in a country dance. The French noblesse are most of them very expert in this exercise. A *grand danseur* is a title which persons of the highest rank are but too frequently not a little proud of acquiring.

The conviction of the utility, or rather the nobleness of this exercise, is carried so far among the French, that one Marcel, a famous dancing-master, composed a treatise on its power and efficacy in refining the mind, and infusing sentiments of elegance and delicacy. He used often to say there was no truer method of discovering the elevation or meanness of temper and disposition in a man, than by examining him attentively in the different attitudes of dancing.

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This latter opinion may not altogether be groundless and whimsical. There is a paper in the Spectator of somewhat a similar tendency, and written purposely to recommend the practice of dancing. No doubt the various motions of the body excite more or less the correspondent emotions of the mind, which dancing was originally invented to express. But we cannot reasonably suppose that it contributes to exalt the understanding or to refine it. The best dancers are usually far from being remarkable for their intellectual merit. On the other hand, persons of the highest capacity and most agreeable behaviour remain all their lives indifferent adepts in this art.

The French dancing-masters imagine themselves personages of much higher consequence than our's are apt to do: owing to that accomplishment being so much more in request and repute among the French than among us; who think rather unfavourably of such as are peculiarly

liarly fond of it. Numbers of our countrymen, however, are so far frenchified as to bestow as many encomiums on a great degree of skill in this attainment, as if they had been bred under the tuition and management of Marcel himself; and had been taught to believe that it raises the dignity and worth of the soul, as much as it graces the deportment of the body.

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C H A P. XXIV.

*On the Spirit of Duelling in France, and other Parts of Europe, during the three last Centuries.*

FROM dancing the transition is natural to fencing. Well may one say that this noble science of defence, as its admirers style it, has proved one of the most offensive inventions to human society. War excepted, there is not in the whole circle of the many causes concurring to the destruction of mankind, any which has effected that purpose more diffusively.

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The evils it was pregnant with soon appeared in the production of its fatal offspring, the spirit of duelling; whose dreadful tyranny prevailed over Europe a full century, in all its horrors; and kindled such a blood-thirsty, revengeful disposition in the hearts of men, as, during a long space of time, set reason and religion at defiance, and rendered life precarious in the most alarming degree.

—Notwithstanding the rage and violence of this pest of human nature is pretty much abated, comparatively to its former influence, it still too widely subsists; and, like an epidemical distemper which all the power of medicine cannot wholly eradicate, its eruptions are manifold in all parts of Europe.

In France, whither this demon flew from Italy, about the beginning of the sixteenth century, it long infested the natives in so terrible a manner that the ties of friendship and kindred became the most dangerous of all connexions; and  
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from being a principle of safety and protection (as by reason and nature designed), they proved the greatest of all misfortunes. The more a man's alliances were extensive, the more he became exposed to demands of personal interference in every quarrel; and consequently, however peaceable in his own temper, he was in continual risk of suffering through the altercations occasioned by the outrageous impetuosity of conduct in others.

These murderous quarrels grew, at last, to be the vogue among all young gentlemen who pretended to spirit; and it was almost ignominious to have preserved one's self free from feuds, and never to have fought a duel.

The slightest causes were sufficient to breed a dispute. A look, a gesture, a word ill-understood, a mere contradiction, or even a difference of opinion, taking the wall of another, omitting the civility of the hat, in short things that good sense should treat as matters beneath all

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attention,

attention, much less resentment, all these were judged cognizable cases; and satisfaction for those reputed injuries was esteemed so necessary to preserve the credit of the person who was deemed affronted, that no man, whose situation in life was genteel, could avoid complying with this sanguinary fashion, unless he meant to seclude himself from society for the remainder of his days, in order to screen himself from the scoffs and indignities he was sure to meet with from all quarters.

This infatuation gained, at length, so pernicious a head, that single combats, while they retained the appellation, were, in fact, the very reverse. It became customary for no man to engage another singly. The whole posse of friends and intimates entered the lists on either side; and a dozen men were sometimes slaughtered on account of the idle altercations between two individuals.

This infernal mode spread like a contagious pestilence over the face of Christendom.

dom. Protestants and Roman Catholics, however they differed in religious matters, agreed in the notion of the necessity that blood should wash away the stains cast upon a man's honour.

Were people of birth, in the present age, to examine their family records, it is much to be questioned whether one could be found of any note and figure in those unhappy times, that has not paid a tribute of some of its blood to this inhuman custom. So universal was its prevalence, that states, though at peace with their neighbours, and unembroiled with political contests, at home, might with woeful truth, be said to be torn to pieces by civil discords, when we reflect how many useful and worthy members of the community were daily butchering one another on the most miserable pretexts.

Such were the accursed consequences of a practice unknown to the most illustrious nations that ever shone in history; and which was, at the same time, so far



from being a proof of personal intrepidity, that it took its rise in that part of Europe whose inhabitants were more deficient in courage than those of any other European country.

The first notable exertion of this destructive art happened at Naples, the place of its nativity, between twelve Italians, and as many Frenchmen of the army of Charles the Eighth, of France, who had just reduced that kingdom to his obedience by the right of conquest. The French of those days, whose bravery was unquestionable, could not produce twelve warriors out of their whole army, able to cope with the Neapolitan champions, who gained a complete victory over their French antagonists, each man soon laying his adversary on the ground.

Small swords were at that time little known. The French *gendarmes*, all men of tried courage, whose prowess in battle was well known every where, and had been particularly felt by the Italians,  
made

made use of large heavy swords, such as are sometimes shewn in the repositories of old abbies and churches abroad, and are often seen affixed to the walls or pillars near the tombs of ancient warriors. These were usually of a size that required the strength of both hands to manage. They had been originally fabricated by the Swiss, at all times a warlike people, but at this period particularly celebrated for their valour and bodily strength. As those who had the greatest number of them in their service thought themselves sure of success, they whose armies had the largest proportion of men robust enough to wield the like weapons, entertained same confidence of course.

This triumph of Italian skill over French courage, roused the indignation of these latter, and determined them to lose no time in rendering themselves equally expert. This they soon accomplished. We find, a few years after, a French general offering to rest the fate

of his master's armies and possessions in that very kingdom, on the decision of his private skill in single combat with the commander of Ferdinand of Spain's forces, his master's more fortunate opponent. But this chieftain happened to prove no less a man than Gonfales of Cordova, justly surnamed the great Captain, and we may not impertinently add the Turenne of his day. He answered the challenge much in the same manner Turenne did that of a German prince, by totally defeating the challenger's army.

In this manner was one of the greatest evils known in these latter ages, the spirit of duelling, brought from Naples, by the French; who paid dear for the transitory laurels they gathered in that region, and long had ample cause to lament their almost momentary possession of it.

Henry the Fourth, the greatest monarch that ever sat on the throne of France, endeavoured ineffectually, to stop the progress of this evil, which was then in the  
zenith

zenith of its fury. But, possibly as he was a man of amazing intrepidity, and had been used, for a series of years, daily to encounter death in every shape, he did not perceive the horror of such deeds so clearly and feelingly as if he had been used to a more pacific life. Perhaps the vindictive temper of the times, which were but just emerging from civil rage and barbarity, and replete with prejudices of all kinds, was too much tinged with the natural ferocity arising from perpetual wars and ignorance, to submit with patience and docility to an injunction so new to their ideas and apprehensions.

Whatever the causes might be, it was reserved for Lewis the Fourteenth not totally to subdue, but to repress, in a great measure, this spirit of implacability. It subsisted until his reign, and had gained ground even in our island : where fortunately however, it never rose to that deplorable height which desolated our less enlightened neighbours ; for the much



less admission and countenance given to this foreign mode, ought unquestionably to be attributed to our superior progress in civilization and polite improvements.

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## C H A P. XXV.

*The same Subject continued.*

**N**Otwithstanding the practice of duelling has been so bitterly censured, there seems no reason to declare absolutely against the science of self-defence. Were, indeed, such a part of education abolished, the world would be gainer by the less number of lives lost in the fatal display of expertness and courage; but as the fashion is so profoundly rooted, that no hopes remain of its ever ending, it is now to be considered in the same light as the art of war; and may, like that, be deemed a necessary evil; the same arguments

arguments that support the legality and fitness of studying, with the utmost application, the pernicious art of destroying whole nations, being surely no less conclusive in authorizing us to learn how to murder individuals in our own defence.

The French youth are quite intoxicated with the merit of excelling in this knowledge ; it is astonishing how many beardless youths have drawn their swords in personal disputes. But the worst of the mischief is, that a single fray is not always sufficient to terminate enmity. The rigid laws of honour require, in certain cases, that, as often as the foe is met, even by unexpected accidents, the attack be repeated. By these means quarrels seldom fail to prove fatal in the end, to one of the parties at least, if not to both ; to say nothing of the infirmities that frequently imbitter the lives of those who, though they survive their wounds, drag on a miserable being in consequence of them. Such men have ample reason to  
lament

lament the misfortune of having conformed to this inhuman prejudice, and approved by their practice, what in their cool, reflecting hours, their reason must necessarily condemn.

The remorse of conscience which one would naturally suppose concomitant on homicide, does not, in all appearance, much infect the remembrance of such deeds. On the contrary, many of the French, instead of expressing sorrow and uneasiness on these unhappy occasions, rather seem to think of them as we would of an engagement in war, where the slain may be spoken of as unfortunate, but the slayers esteem themselves fully absolved from the necessity of feeling any repentance or compunction.

Such is too frequently the light these enormities are viewed in. One hears people sometimes recounting the number, and giving a detail of their duels, just in the manner an English tar would relate the battles he has been in at sea.

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So great is the power of long established prejudice, that numbers of the French almost esteem and respect a man who is noted for a duellist. This may be inferred from the frequent praises they bestow on what they call a *forte épée*, "a good swordsman;" and still more from their manner of extolling the valour of those individuals, who have performed the most numerous feats in this dreadful field of honour.

Certain it is, the French are more callous in these matters than the English. Persons otherwise of a humane, compassionate disposition, listen to the recital of these honourable murders with indifference and seeming unfeelingness.

From what has been premised it is natural to conclude, that the *salles d'armes*, the "fencing schools" at Paris, are dangerous resorts for youth. An elderly, grave gentleman, whose experience of them had convinced him of this truth, used often to declare that he had rather his son should  
make



make the hottest campaign, than frequent these schools during the same space of time, as he thought the chances of war were the more eligible.

What chiefly renders these places so unsafe is that, in each of them, there is usually some equally arrogant and resolute coxcomb, who assumes the province of dictator, and whom to contradict is to challenge. As people of this stamp commonly act in this insolent manner, from a consciousness of their superior skill, the caution used to avoid altercations with them, renders them only much readier, and fearless in giving affronts.

A young man must, therefore, be possessed of an uncommon share of temper and prudence, who can steer safely through the perils that surround him in such an element of discord; where, besides the above mentioned fiend, he will have to face those many *tapageurs* (bravoes) who, strange and unaccountable as such a disposition

position must seem, infest these places in quest of broils.

The French are often apt to express their surprize, that so brave a nation as the English, should pay little regard to what they deem an essential part of genteel education ; and that we should be so averse to admit of their maxims in these matters, and so willing to terminate amicably differences that with them would occasion the warmest resentment.

Some Frenchmen, indeed, unwilling, as it were, to lose the countenance and sanction of our countrymen, would fain insinuate that the English have also figured in this province ; and instance the famous duel between the lords Sackville and Bruce, so particularly described in the Guardian.

It may not be amiss to remark, that the assertion contained in the motto of the paper alluded to in that performance, is glaringly erroneous. How so judicious a writer could coincide with it is somewhat astonishing ;

astounding; as daily proofs evince, that such a love of fame as impels individuals to refer the decision of their disputes to the sword, far from being a

————— glorious heat,  
Only destructive to the brave and great,

involves in the same destruction the most worthless and contemptible of men.

We may conclude this review of so baneful a delusion with the words of Lucan,

Quis furor, O cives quæ tanta  
Dementia ferri?

“ Whence can proceed this senseless fury, this  
“ mad propensity, to blood and carnage ?”

They are not less applicable to that horrid perversity of mind, which, in modern ages has rendered the unrelenting prosecution of revenge in private quarrels meritorious, than to that ferocious implacability between contending factions, which formerly filled the Roman empire with reciprocal massacres and assassinations.

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This outrageous thirst for mutual destruction may certainly be ranked among the most fatal errors that ever took possession of society : it prompts man to bid defiance to laws ; to slight the suggestions of reason and the admonitions of conscience ; to condemn those ties and obligations which friendship and beneficence ought to render sacred and inviolable. In a word, to break through all that is dearest to human nature, in order to obey a prejudice founded on the most absurd principles that ever were, in an evil hour, fabricated for the mischief of mankind, by men of narrow hearts and depraved imaginations.

While individuals are through connivance permitted to terminate their private differences in this manner, it argues equal neglect and ignorance in the legislature, and that a people is not arrived to a perfect state of civilization.



## C H A P. XXVI.

*On the respective Aptitude and Disposition of the French  
and English for Pleasure and Activity.*

**A**FTER having so freely censured the French for the false, unwarrantable notions of honour, entertained among them, and their guilty compliance with the modes of asserting it, we may now enter on a more agreeable task, and take a view of them in the light of social beings, and partakers of the pleasures of a free and easy intercourse. Herein they are avowedly fit to give laws to mankind, and to be cited as the happiest models of imitation.

As the acquisition of immense riches is not so much the object of their cares and labours as it is that of the English, they are consequently more at leisure to attend to the enjoyment of moderate possessions: while we, on the contrary, embark in every scheme, in order to increase our  
stock,

stock, and never imagine that a man is blameable for toiling to that purpose, during the whole course of his life.

Such are the generality of people in England engaged in business. Though far removed from the character of niggards, a vice quite foreign to our soil, they are restless in their endeavours to obtain enormous wealth.

In this respect, we strongly resemble the Carthaginians, whose desire of money was insatiable, and over whom the Romans had no other superiority than that which proceeded from a more moderate *auri sacra fames*, "thirst of lucre."

The superior facility the French have a right to boast, in comparison of the English, in the procuring of familiar mirth and festivity, may be deduced, in a great measure, from their being burdened with a less weight of attention to pecuniary concerns.

It should not, however, be thence inferred that their regard for money is infe-

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rior to that professed here. The true state of the case is, that they are not less tenacious of what they possess than we are: but then, either they feel a less powerful inclination to acquire more, or, perhaps, are not indued with that resolution and perseverance which are necessary to carry a man through those difficulties which accompany the pursuit of riches.

The great foundation of commercial prosperity is a patient, cool, and almost phlegmatic assiduity. This the French, in general, most certainly have not. Experience teaches that ingenuity (of which they have incontestably no small portion) is not a synonymous word with industry. By this are meant diligence and application; qualities those people are commonly furnished with in a more extensive degree, who have but least of the former. As a proof of this we may single out the Dutch, whose laboriousness is not more conspicuous and proverbial than their unaptness and want of vivacity in such arts

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as require a quickness of thought, and a readiness of invention.

The French, indeed, are, from another material cause, less stimulated to dedicate themselves to toil for the sake of affluence ; and therefore have turned the edge of their appetite and fancy to other objects. As wealth alone, however immense, is not, by the nature of their government, allowed much importance and consideration, the call for riches cannot of course be so great there as in a country where they are the most essential basis of personal influence. The chief end a Frenchman can reasonably wish to attain them for, is in order to enjoy the sweets of society, and procure the various comforts and delights of life. We Englishmen have more enlarged prospects ; and besides the pleasures and luxuries we propose to come at, as well as the French, have that far weightier object in our eye, the *digito monstrari*, the passion of becoming persons of consequence in the political world ; a situation



not attainable in a free country, without a large measure of opulence as well as of intrinsic merit.

The more, it is said, we dilate the sphere of our wishes, the greater becomes the difficulty of arriving at content. We cannot therefore, according to that idea, expect to participate an aptitude for mirth equal to that we so commonly meet with in the French; whose aims and pursuits are so much circumscribed. But, on the other hand, may there not enter as much happiness in that activity of mind which prompts us to be always on the wing of eagerness and desire, as in that serenity which becalms the passions? Are not, for example, those agitations that fill the mind of a lover, while hope is unallayed with fear, as agreeable to fancy, as the constant, uninterrupted course of domestic satisfaction and felicity which he claims the right of enjoying under the more secure title of husband? ,

Men are often egregious dupes of apathy by mistaking it for contentment. An  
indolent,

indolent, listless disposition, is farther off from felicity than a restless one, ever in motion, and ever intent on the execution of its numberless schemes. We are too apt to bestow the title of placidity and content on what is no more, in fact, than aversion to activity. Many individuals are pronounced happy and satisfied with their condition, who are inwardly fretting at it, though unwilling to bestir themselves, in order to bring about an alteration. With as little foundation we accuse of ambition, and class among the uneasy and discontented, those whose ruling passion is an abhorrence of rest. The activity of such characters is prompted much less by a spirit of covetousness, and a desire of acquiring, than by a native and deep-rooted love and habit of action and employment, in the gratification of which their felicity consists.

People of the former disposition are usually contracted in their notions, and fordid in their conduct; great pretenders

to oeconomy, but in reality timorous guardians of their possessions, and no ways inclined to liberality: while the others, from being engaged in attempts beneficial to the community, often acquire a turn to munificence, and feel a laudable pride in being serviceable: these, on the contrary, from being solely centered in the private, narrow circle of their own concerns, dare not, as it were, step out of themselves. Such men too readily construe the effects of a generous temper into prodigality; and the exertions of an enterprizing mind into want of forecast.

We should not, therefore, be too sanguine in over-rating the merit of all those who sit down quietly to enjoy a moderate lot without care and disturbance. Their ostensible motive may be the preference they give to the pleasures of domestic tranquillity; yet we have often good ground to presume the original cause to have been either want of ability, or inclination,

nation, to take any pains to improve their circumstances.

There is frequently much vanity at the bottom of those pretences to moderation and philosophy, that numbers would willingly cloak their indolence with. We cannot be too vigilant in detecting and exposing it, lest a manly and useful propensity to scenes of business and action should be deemed less meritorious than it really is, and ought to be accounted; and lest it should, through false pretences and reasonings, become like a deserted province, which they whose duty it was to preserve it, have abandoned and lost, for want of courage to defend it.

By saying so much in praise of a busy life, it is not meant to insinuate that the French are of an inactive turn. They certainly are quite the contrary. But then their activity differs materially from ours, both in the ends it proposes, and in the manner it is exerted. They employ it much more than we do in matters of small



importance. We excel them in the choice of objects; the motives that prompt us are commonly of weight. Unless impelled by such, we are not easily roused: whereas little undertakings will set them into great agitation, and create more warmth and solicitude than they deserve.

Coolness is undeniably much more our talent than theirs. Hence we may, to the unthinking, appear deficient in quickness, while, in reality, we are only free from precipitation, its capital enemy, the more dangerous as, by assuming its form, it acts the part of a false friend, and under the notion of conducting us the nearest way to the object in view, leads us into numberless errors.

Precipitation is, unquestionably, more impedimental than even slowness itself. This, though it may retard our operations, yet ought rather to be considered as chains, the burden and incumbrance of which is, indeed, a clog to speed, but not an absolute hindrance to motion: while the  
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former is like a stumbling-block that overthrows our schemes at the very first setting out on their execution.

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## C H A P. XXVII.

*The same Subject continued.*

**W**HETHER it proceeds from carelessness of thought, backwardness to engage in difficulties, or moderation of desires, the French do not, in general, apply with so much fervour and diligence to the attainment of riches as the English. Their minds consequently being less burdened with business, they are more at leisure to indulge themselves in ease and merriment.

Their enjoyments, however, are much more uniform and subject to rotation than ours; the reason of which is, that being, from various causes, on a more friendly, familiar footing among themselves than  
people

people are in England, they have, accordingly, less occasion to go abroad in quest of recreation. This we are, on the other hand, necessitated to do, from want of that reciprocal intercourse of domestic gaiety they so justly reproach us with.

The English seem to court pleasure like a mistress who must be well paid for her favours; whereas the French treat her like an old acquaintance that is to be used without ceremony. Hence we seek for diversion in our public resorts of entertainment, most of which are no small drain to the purse: while they have discovered the art of diverting themselves without expence, by those amicable family associations so much diffused throughout all France. These contribute more than any other cause, to keep alive that vein of mirth they are so noted for, by affording it continual employment.

The principal seasoner of these private societies, so numerous and so deservedly admired, is an *enjouement*, an easy flow of sprightliness

sprightliness that suffers not the gloomy side of things to be seen; that handles all subjects without too much inquisitiveness, and with the sole view of promoting festivity; that borrows, in short, from the whole circle of ideas, those which nature has designed for the creation and purposes of pleasure, and as studiously displays them in all their shapes and colours.

Another no less agreeable than necessary concomitant is a strain of good breeding, unmixed with stiffness or ceremony, that heightens the relish for pleasure, by keeping it within bounds, and not permitting it to degenerate into tumultuousness and indecency.

Hence a truth and delicacy of taste are formed, no nation surpasses, and few can rival the French in; whose knowledge and expertness how to compass and enjoy the intellectual elegancies of life is arrived at the highest eminence. The claim of priority in these polite attainments must, indeed,



indeed, be allowed to the English, who, as already observed, incontestibly led the way in the field of refinement. But, without depreciating the latter, it may be said, that the French have enlarged the original plan, by calling in to the assistance of wit and sense, that facetiousness and jocundity of ideas, and that ease and freedom of manners, neither of which had yet been brought to the degree of perfection requisite to render society completely delightful.

By intellectual elegance is meant that refinement of thought and expression which not only animates but adorns every topic of conversation, and that gracefulness and address which confers an additional weight on what is spoken.

In the first of these improvements the English had already the greatest merit: but the second seemed reserved for the French to bring to its most brilliant maturity. It ought to be acknowledged that they supremely excel in the art of making  
mutual

mutual intercourse a fund of the highest entertainment and delight.

This consideration should counterbalance the frivolous peculiarities incident to the character of the French, and induce people ingenuously to do justice to that spirit of good humour and sociability which influences their manners in so captivating a degree.

Were the English more inclined to cultivate this valuable art than some have thought compatible with their temper, and others with their government, they appear no less calculated to shine therein than any people whatever. Their mental qualifications are inferior to those of no nation. The freedom they enjoy enables them to deliver their sentiments without restraint; and they possess all the advantages resulting from opulence, that most effectual encouragement and support of all agreeable and endearing accomplishments.

We do not, however, seem to judge favourably enough of these engaging talents

lents for society ; and speak of them only as transitory methods of spending time agreeably. Yet the fact is, that they are the means of rendering life a scene of perpetual enjoyment, by that diffusion of chearfulness over all our thoughts, which produces an equal aptitude to be pleased with others, and to become acceptable to them.

To conclude this subject : the French, though not superior, if equal to the English, in the virtues of a more exalted nature and talents, deserve, in the opinion of unbiaſſed judges, a preference in the ſecondary qualifications. Rarely, therefore, are they diſappointed in their endeavours to be acceptable in all ſocieties, by the unaffected propenſity and aptneſs they diſplay for ſocial pleaſure. The complaiſance of their behaviour, and the gaiety of their deportment, are eaſy and natural ; and they acquit themſelves of the duties of good breeding with leſs formality than any other nation.

## C H A P. XXVIII.

*On convivial Enjoyments in France and England.*

**N**O European nation is fonder of convivial enjoyments than the French: such among them as are able to afford it, are very ready to make entertainments for their friends and acquaintance, and to treat them in the most refined and luxurious manner.

Some critical foreigners, the English especially, are apt to hint, that as cookery is with the French an art of infinite variety, they have, in consequence of the numberless experiments daily made in it, discovered a secret not yet much known among other nations, that of making a little pass for much. The utility of such a discovery is evident to all connoisseurs in these matters, from the readiness and dexterity wherewith inventions of this nature are adopted and improved: a circumstance alluded to by one of our countrymen



trymen whose appetite was, it seems, rather of too hearty a frame to prefer nicety to abundance; and who used to observe that *parvum in multo*, "a great shew and little reality," was a saying not unapplicable to many of their tables.

These strictures might possibly be true in the case of some pretenders to opulence, unwilling to rank beneath the *donneurs de bons repas*, "feast-makers," a title which in France numbers of people are very desirous to assume. But still it were unjust to deny the spirit of hospitality prevailing among the generality of individuals that are in plentiful circumstances.

Many of their people of fashion would be uneasy at the thoughts of sitting down to table alone. Hence, as their example is of diffusive influence in a country where an imitation of the great is more prevalent than any where, open tables, as already observed, are common among such as are in a situation to keep them.

In the mean time the genius of mirth presides on all these occasions in its fullest glory.

glory. All the *bons propos*, "diverting topics," a jovial mind can suggest; all the facetious stories that archness can recollect or invent; in short, whatever belongs to wit and pleasure is looked upon as essential in such assemblies. They seldom, if ever, admit of political dissertations to interfere, and carefully keep at a distance every object that wears the least aspect of seriousness.

It were a groundless severity to assert that nothing of this sort is seen among us. We see enough of it. But the misfortune is, that it rarely fails gradually to fall away. From the raptures of good fellowship, we often find ourselves, at the conclusion of a merry meeting, involved in some party altercation that not unfrequently terminates fatally.

This, happily, is never the case among the French, who always provide a sufficient fund of exhilarating subjects to keep up the warmth of joy; and never deviate into those unseasonable disquisitions that

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cast a cloud on most of our English banquets.

It ought, however, to be confessed that in a country like England, political discussions in convivial assemblies, are often far from being improper and unseasonable. It is through the unrestrained reciprocation of thought on such occasions, that men feel the pulse of each other, and that the sentiments of the sensible and the patriotic, which otherwise might never transpire, are collected and propagated. We owe to this cause, more than to any other, the preservation of our free constitution, which might be much more easily undermined, if people abstained from venting their opinions of men and measures in company.

We are not, therefore, to give the French more credit on this head than they are entitled to. Their silence on subjects of this nature is not merely the effect of a superior turn for pleasantry and good fellowship, but is chiefly owing to a consciousness

sciousness of the danger they would expose themselves to by engaging in such conversations.

What further contributes no less agreeably than effectually to prevent them, is the presence of the fair sex, without whom the French very reasonably imagine no party of pleasure can deserve such a name. They are, consequently, very solicitous to compose their associations of an equal mixture of both sexes; which is considered in France, as it ought to be every where as the properest method of preserving a true spirit of civility and cheerfulness in all companies.

No nation that wishes to be renowned for politeness and breeding should countenance any other method. There still subsists among the English a propensity to exclude the company of their fair country women from their convivial pastimes; not reflecting that such an exclusion, of course, induces men to be less on their guard against indecorums.



The force of custom alone can account for the prevalence of a practice that tends so powerfully to lessen the value of social enjoyments, and to nourish those seeds of faction and discord that some very observing and accurate foreigners think more deeply sown in our minds than in those of any other people.

Some political zealots, on the other hand, have thought that the less we converse with woman-kind, the more we shall retain of that vigour and fortitude of soul necessary to support independency and freedom; and that a greater communication would only promote effeminacy, and relax the native manliness of our disposition.

But experience is not on the side of this opinion. Slavery is far more generally established in those countries where the sexes are debarred a full liberty of mutual intercourse, than in those where they have the most unobstructed access to each other. Witness the Asiatic parts of  
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the world ; where women are little better than imprisoned all their lives ; and where the men are, at the same time, the tame and despicable victims of the most unbounded and most heinous tyranny.

The introduction of despotism into France, was not, certainly, owing to the regard the French profess for female society. Long before they were reduced to political servitude, they were universally renowned for an attachment to the company of the fair sex.

It is only, therefore, by too constant an association with woman-kind, and by carrying this attachment to an improper extreme, that the minds of men can be enervated, and any detriment accrue to public freedom.

There is, however, no danger of English liberty being lost through any excess of devotion in our men to the company of the women. The affairs of the nation claim so considerable a share in our thoughts, at all times and places, that

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they will ever lead us to seek principally the society of such as can make a party with us on that favourite chapter.

Meanwhile, in the midst of that total dissolution of care, and those boundless sallies of joy attending their feasts, a circumstance highly to the credit of the French is their remarkable sobriety. Bacchus is not permitted to tyrannize over them ; and only governs like the king of a limited monarchy : very different, in this respect, from some of their northern neighbours, and from what we were ourselves not many years ago ; when the rules of moderation in drinking were absolutely unknown, and their absence opened a door to all manner of riotousness. Happily the times have undergone a very necessary reformation in this particular.

It may be questioned whether the lower sort of people in France, are not more addicted to feasting, on their days of relaxation from business, which are many, than our commonalty on their days, which  
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are few. Possibly, the more constant uniformity of good living among the inferior sort in England diminishes their avidity to fare better at one time than another. Whereas in France, it is somewhat according to the proverb, all a feast, or all a fast. Thus from a penurious course of feeding on their working-days, they are glad to emerge to something more comfortable on their holidays: and while our people are, perhaps, solacing themselves over a dish of tea, or a draught of ale, when the afternoon walk is over, one may see the environs of Paris crouded with folks regaling themselves with all the dainties that money can procure.

Whatever some foreigners may pretend, the English, in respect of food, are not, on the whole, deserving the epithet of a luxurious nation. Plain, simple, substantial nourishment is yet in the greatest request among us. We look on high living in its proper light, as a matter of mere transient curiosity, the gratification of which,

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though



though innocent, while unfrequent, becomes extremely culpable when it degenerates into habit.

This remark may include even persons of superior rank, who (no doubt with exceptions) are very far from being sunk into that effeminate fondness for culinary niceties, for which the nobility and fashionable classes in other countries are so peculiarly noted.

Such a laudable preference to simplicity in these matters, is of more consequence than a shallow perception may apprehend : it not only contributes to the health and strength of our bodies, but by inuring nature to be satisfied with, and to consult wholesomeness rather than delicacy, it prompts men, in pursuance of this salutary practice, to be careful in providing an abundance of what is necessary, and to pay but a small attention to superfluities.

This national quality did not escape Montesquieu. That profound investigator

tor of men and things (in his review of our principles and manners) does not disdain to cast an eye of applause on that part of our wisdom. He gives it the significant and forcible appellation of *luxe solide*, "a solid luxury," flowing from the dictates of good sense, and founded on the utility resulting to the public from an abstinence of needless, unmanly refinements in the modes of nourishment. This, which we may define true luxury, in opposition to that which has usurped and disgraced the name, doubles in a manner the productions of nature, by using them without wantonness and dissipation; while the other, on the contrary, lessens them by waste and profusion, and through the misuse of plenty is often the parent of want.

## C H A P. XXIX.

*On the Vanity of the French in their Apparel—and their  
Presumption in Discourse—Literary Education too com-  
mon in France—its pernicious Consequences.*

THE streets of Paris do not exhibit such frequent scenes of drunkenness as those of London. The poorer sort are less addicted to liquor than our English rabble, and had rather save for the purposes of raiment, that money which is by ours consumed in gluttony. In these respects the populace in that city are indisputably preferable to that of our metropolis.

While the meanest of the lowest classes among the French are thus attentive to the appearance of their persons, we need not be surprised that their betters are studiously taken up with the same object. In France it is viewed in a light of much higher importance than elsewhere; arising from the preposterous desire most individuals

duals are tormented with to figure above their condition.

This foible glaringly stigmatizes the French nation: neither can it be denied that of late years we have experienced a tincture of the same infatuation; though not proportionably to that which is current in France; where many affect to be, and some almost believe themselves, of a consequence equal to their appearance. This often is sumptuous to a degree that is hardly credible when the mediocrity of the situation in life of such as assume these airs is taken at the same time into consideration.

A Frenchman, exclusive of his extravagance in apparel will often, carry his vanity so far as to lay out almost all he is worth in trinkets of the most expensive value, in order to make a parade among his acquaintance, and inculcate a notion of the prosperity of his circumstances. The practice however is so frequent and stale that he ought to be fully apprised



prised a cheat of this sort will not pass. As he is surrounded by practitioners in the same arts, they know what to think of him by what they know of themselves.

But the truth is, that in whatever condition fortune may have placed many a Frenchman, he will contrive, unless very low indeed, to find ways and means to render her frowns in some measure ineffectual. By making a glitter in his dress, and affecting a consciousness of dignity in his discourse, he will, if not impose on others, at least deceive himself into a persuasion that he is able to command attention and respect.

Hence that boldness with which he intrudes on company; that effrontery with which he invades every province of discourse; that temerity which engages him in scenes from which his only harvest is at best ridicule, and often ignominy; that impertinence which, in spite of the visible scantiness of his means, hurries him into dissertations on the multiplicity of his expences;

pences; that insolence which impels him to pretences of connection with those from whose acquaintance and society his insignificancy is an evident preclusion; but with whose absent persons he denies himself no manner of familiarities.

Such characters, however, are so well known that their petulance is noways regarded. Like animals whose venom is not dangerous, there is no mischief attending their intercourse. They are spoken of slightly, and treated every where with indifference or derision. In the mean time their career suffers no interruption: happy within, they defy all contempt from without, and resolutely persist in outfacing the sneers of the world, and overcoming every proof of their insignificancy.

There is an insensibility in this sort of people that steels them against all reproof, and makes it almost impossible to abash them, however considerable or potent their antagonists, or their arguments may be.

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Detect them in falsehoods ; expose their arrogance ; convict them of meanness ; in short, lay them out in their truest colours, it is labour lost : they will brave one out of the best supported assertions, and, in a manner, confute the clearest evidence against them.

After having represented a species of beings very common among the French, it cannot be dissembled that they have imitators in other nations, and even among us ; but neither so numerous, nor any ways comparable to them for adroitness.

Notwithstanding the native chearfulness of the French, no people when unsuccessful in their affairs, are proner to lament the injustice of their destiny.

Men of this plaintive, querulous disposition are numerous in France, from a variety of causes. The most usual one is the too great multitude of such as receive a literary education ; which necessarily elevates the spirit of a man, and often  
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lifts it above the level of his fortune. Thus, when youth is spent, and the season of study is over, men of genius are naturally seeking for opportunities to reap the fruits of their past application, and to exercise those talents they have been so long cultivating. But fatal experience convinces them that capacity without interest makes but a small progress, and that unless they can submit to a total recommencement of life, on a new plan, their hopes of succeeding in the world have a very slight foundation. Disheartened at such a prospect, too many of them, rather than undergo so painful a renovation of them, are apt to sit down patiently under the pressures of indigence, and to wait, with resignation to present hardships, for one of those extraordinary turns of good luck that will sometimes happen in the lottery of life when we least expect it.

Such a situation is only to be borne with calmness by persons of a philosophic disposition, that can face the shocks and perplexities



plexities of want and distress, through the strength of reflexion on the number of those who share it with themselves, and yet, much less from reason than habit, suffer little or no inconvenience from it.

Were it not for contemplations of this cast, men of parts, oppressed by the severity of fate, would be the most miserable of beings. But as the school of adversity teaches a variety of useful lessons, they who have been trained in it, reap this greatest of all advantages, that of suiting themselves to the humour of fortune, and of rarely falling into weakness and despondency.

Too many are those, not only in France, but elsewhere, to whom this description is applicable. What chiefly aggravates the misery of such a condition, is, that the more they are conscious of their worthiness to be stationed on a conspicuous list in society, the less they will condescend to embrace those base offers that wealthy pride so bitterly censures them for refusing.

ing. These offers however prove too often the only means left them to keep themselves above water, and to emerge from those extremities which one might naturally enough presume that great abilities were never designed nor likely to taste of. But for the reasons enumerated, no mortals seem predestined to undergo more frequent and more mortifying trials than those who are avowedly possessed of superior talents and capacity.

## CHAPTER XXX.

*On the Ideas the French and English entertain of each other in Matters of Government and Politics.*

A Characteristical disparity between the English and the French, is the manner in which the spirit of national pride operates upon them respectively.

This passion, deeply rooted as it is in the

the breast of men, assumes different appearances as the nature and disposition of the people whom it influences happen to be dissimilar.

Fame, the chief basis and origin of pride, is equally thirsted for by all nations; but the means employed to acquire it are very far from being invariably the same every where.

Thus the French look with more complacency on several of those mediums that procure it than the English do; and these, on the other hand, behold with contempt many of those measures which the former pursue in order to become objects of admiration and applause.

The political principles professed by various nations, influence essentially their pursuits and ardour for praise and renown. In that infallible criterion of the public character of a people, it is well known that the English and the French differ totally from each other in every material respect.

An Englishman glories in his liberty; the security of his possessions; his defiance of tyranny; to detect the schemes of which, and to punish the instruments of oppression, he accounts as much his duty as his interest. He speaks of his sovereign, not as of a master whose commands he is to execute without examination or delay, but as of a magistrate equally bound with the meanest of his subjects, to observe those laws in the framing whereof their concurrence is deemed as necessary as his own. He holds him under the same obligation to respect their privileges, as they are to testify their loyalty by conforming to those injunctions which enforce a legal obedience to the crown in the departments committed to its charge.

We seldom fail to accompany this enumeration of our privileges with taunts and sneers at the servility and lowminded submission of other nations to the rod of despotism, which reduces human na-



tute to the level of mere animals, by depriving them of their native right of reasoning, and by extorting obedience from them only through violence and compulsion.

The principal argument adduced by the French in disputes of this nature, in support of their countrymen's superior worth, is their inviolable attachment and fidelity to their kings, and the unabated reverence they have always preserved, even for such as were not guiltless of transgressing the bounds of mildness and moderation in their government.

This they deem an unanswerable proof of their national discretion and humanity; as by forbearing to give vent to their just resentments on such occasions, they have prevented consequences that would have made the remedy worse than the disease.

Without determining the merits of this assertion, suffice it to say the French are fully persuaded of its rectitude. In pursuance of this conviction, they violently repro-

reprobate the disparity of conduct in the English on similar emergencies, and deem their own a clear proof of their superior wisdom and forecast.

Hence they are so warm and impetuous in the allegation of those passages in our history that seem to countenance their assertions. Nor are they singular in their notions. Most foreigners have but a very limited knowledge of our constitution. Entertaining no idea of the lawfulness of any resistance from subjects to their rulers, they condemn, without hesitation, the successful struggles of our ancestors for their freedom.

Whatever the suggestions of prejudice or malevolence may be to the disparagement of the English nation, there is but one passage at which their indignation, as well as our own, is reasonably excited, the treatment of our unfortunate Charles the First, a prince whose memory is peculiarly in veneration among the French, and whose virtues and good qualities they

are zealous in extolling; not so much, perhaps, from a sincere esteem and regard for his character, as in order to enhance the odium they strive, more than any other people, to load us with on account of his tragical end.

It is particularly on this occasion the French seem to triumph; and exalt themselves, in their imaginations, above the ferocious inhabitants of a country, who could imbrue their hands in the blood of their sovereign. This is the constant style they use, from their ignorance, real or affected, of the circumstances attending that event.

Without enquiring into the justice or iniquity of the sentence which brought that unhappy monarch to the block, we may assert, that persons of reading and candour, will no more tax the collective body of this nation with the ignominy of having authorised or even abetted it, than they will brand the national character of a people with cruelty for having, at any period,

riod, been involved in the most irreconcilable and sanguinary feuds. Of these any country may occasionally become the prey, without losing that fund of humanity whereon its general reputation is founded. No modern nation furnishes more deplorable instances of blood-thirstiness and factious implacability than the French themselves.

But these distinctions are not attended to by the majority of mankind. They view things in the gross, and are either unable or unwilling to be at the pains of obtaining that discriminate information which alone can set them in their proper light.

Thus as that tragedy was perpetrated in England, the English at large must bear the blame and disgrace resulting from it; and are, therefore, undistiguishingly accused by the French, of being a barbarous and merciless generation, incapable of setting bounds to our revenge.



On the supposed veracity of these groundless reproaches, are founded those pretensions to a greater dignity of national character, which the French are so warm in maintaining.

The sum of these altercations is, that We despise them as slaves ; and They in return, affirm that we are lit le better than wild, untamable savages ; ready, at the least provocation, to subvert the very foundations of government ; to list with the most outrageous impetuosity under the banner of sedition ; to trample on every maxim of concord and lenity, and rush headlong to those extremities that are more terrible and insupportable than the worst condition of slavery.

Such is the sentence a French tribunal passes on Englishmen. They, on the other hand, are not less violent in branding the arguments of their adversaries with weakness and futility, and tending to debase human nature. Though willing to make concessions as to the illegality of  
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some proceedings, they are proud of the general opposition which the attempts to establish unlimited power have so conspicuously met with in this island: they derive as much honour from it, in their own apprehensions, as prejudice and want of due information in presumptuous strangers, would ascribe to them of infamy in the methods necessarily pursued in order to obtain and secure that salutary end.

Thus we see that what is the boast of one nation, is by the other reputed a cause of shame; and that deeds, on the one side, adjudged noble and meritorious are, on the other, viewed with contempt and detestation.

It was thought necessary to enlarge upon this subject, as the French, in the height of their zeal for the glory of their country, are strangely prone to make an immeasurable parade of their loyalty, and to represent ours in the most disadvantageous light. No stronger instance can at the same time be produced, in how different a channel

a channel the chief pride of each nation flows, than by stating the respective arguments urged on either side as proofs of super-eminence. They forcibly demonstrate how wide a disparity, even in matters of the most immediate and continual importance to the welfare of mankind, the habits contracted by education are able to imprint in the minds of men: while some can fix the blackest stain of defamation on a way of thinking which others hold in the highest esteem, and pronounce the only true system of sound policy.

# CHAP. XXXI.

*The same Subject continued.—Cautions respecting Travellers and Describers of Nations.*

**A**N observation resulting from what has been premised, is that the English and the French commencing their dissensions at the fountain-head, we are not to wonder they should continue them  
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with such inveteracy in all their political concerns.

This national antipathy animates both people, from the highest to the lowest denominations ; and equally breaks forth on the smallest as well as on the greatest emergencies.

They are restless in their animosities ; and like armies preparing for the day of battle, are incessantly busied in detecting the weak side of the enemy, and making the most of every trifling advantage over them.

Whether in affairs of peace or of war ; whether of a public or of a private nature, this national antipathy, not seldom degenerates into the rankest malice, and magnifies or diminishes without mercy, the good or evil qualities of either people. Hence those groundless, unjust sarcasms so ill-naturedly devised and so illiberally applied. Hence that petulance of disposition which condemns unexamined, and almost unknown things and persons worthy of approbation and respect.

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It were a disagreeable task to particularize the many instances that could be produced in support of those allegations. It is a still more painful reflection, that we need not seek for them in the dregs of either nation (where one might most naturally expect to find them), but among those who ought to be, and are, indeed, better apprised; yet, hurried away by the torrent of contagious prejudice, are willing to humour the croud, or afraid to stem its fury.

From these iniquitous motives it happens, that, both in England and in France, such liberties are taken with truth, that a considerable part of society is in the dark, respecting the real character of two nations, whose fame and proximity should render them no strangers to each other.

Prompted by a wanton, absurd hatred, the mischievous in both countries, a numerous tribe, are at no small pains to inflame, by defamatory reports, the minds of their countrymen, and thereby cut asunder,

afunder, as far as in them lies, those bonds of harmony, friendliness and good fellowship, which the politics of neither country forbid their respective individuals to form. These incendiaries seem no less to rejoice when they can disturb the unanimity of private intercourse, than when their wishes of public enmity are gratified by an open rupture. The bloody contests in which the two realms are so frequently involved ought, one would think, to alarm and interest humanity much more than they generally seem to do; and to teach both sides, that however emulation is a virtue and a happiness, it ceases to be either the moment it impels us to carry our competition into the field of death, and to erect our trophies on the destruction of our antagonists.

The candid and benevolent are struck with surprise, when they reflect with what readiness mankind is apt to embrace opinions that tend so directly and effectually to alienate them from each other. But

Impartiality is an acquisition obtained by very few. It is a salary earned by a laborious attention to the merit of others, as well as to our own. This is rather an irksome, unpleasant task to the generality of men. They delight in contemplating, as it were exclusively, their own perfections, and cannot therefore be supposed desirous of discovering aught of superior excellence in others.

We find that the inhabitants of all countries hearken eagerly to those accounts that debase the character of their neighbours; the depression of whom is a grateful sacrifice to the vanity of each in particular, by the share he claims in the fancied exaltation thence accruing to his countrymen.

To these causes it is owing that both English and French, swallow with scandalous avidity the rumours circulated by rancour, prejudice, or levity. Instead of endeavouring, as by the laws of humanity bound, to lessen that hostility of temper  
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which a state of perpetual mistrust in our political transactions mutually produces; they labour to widen the breach, and to render all communication disgusting, by representing a malevolence of design as reciprocally inherent in each other's schemes and enterprizes, whatever face or appellation they may assume.

Of this despicable kind of enmity both parties are equally guilty. Too often is countenance given to impositions calculated to mislead the credulous and uninformed, and to represent the rival nations in the most illiberal, disgraceful light: to say nothing of the invectives that soil the pages of writers in both countries who have dealt roundly in suppositions injurious to each.

The errors, faults, and vices of a people, ought, indeed, never to be spared. The concealment or extenuation of them deprives the world of the right it has to learn what is ridiculous, wrong, or wicked; when the purpose obviously intended is  
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not to expose individuals, but to censure the public at large.

For this reason national defects ought to be depicted in their fullest colours, and brought to the openest light. But in the career of censure a candid critic will remember not to condemn without proof of guilt, nor unless the offence be manifest, and beyond the power of contradiction. He will, therefore, adhere to that fundamental maxim of all equitable judges, not to confide in his penetration alone, but to call in the assistance of others. In disquisitions of this nature whoever proceeds on no other evidence than that limited one resulting from his own personal experience, may rightly be accused of giving his verdict a very precarious foundation. Though such knowledge may hold good so far as it relates to the character of individuals, it cannot be allowed of sufficient weight, where such multitudes are concerned as compose the body of a nation.

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In such a case a number of examiners, proportionable to the populousness of it, is also required; from whose concurrent observations only we are entitled to pronounce any judgment on its virtues and demerits with tolerable certainty.

A due share of credit belongs to those who having visited various countries, have laid before the world such representations of their inhabitants as seemed to them consistent with truth. We may rely on the veracity of persons of sense and integrity when they relate the particular occurrences they were concerned in, or were witnesses of, in the course of their travels and investigations of men and things.

But still we should be cautious never to permit credulity to gain ground. This it will unavoidably do, if we neglect to compare the divers relations and descriptions of countries and nations with each other; and to weigh the different opportunities travellers have had of acquiring knowledge and receiving information, accord-

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ing to their respective talents and condition.

The most guarded and discreet in other respects are sometimes apt to describe and characterise with great freedom and latitude, the people and transactions that have fallen under their cognizance. But however acute and sagacious, no man is impowered to decide, by his sole opinion, of what passes within that almost impenetrable sanctuary, the mind, even of one person, nor by what motives it is usually actuated, without the previous medium of an intimate acquaintance: much less is he qualified to pronounce definitively concerning the sentiments and dispositions of so many thousands with whom he is unconnected. We ought, therefore, to be extremely cautious not to indulge a precipitate persuasion of the reality of the many portraits of individuals, and pictures of a whole people, drawn with so much apparent accuracy by the pens of certain travellers. From  
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the excessive boldness and luxuriancy of their descriptions, one may suspect that they sought to be eloquent rather than judicious, and were altogether much more intent to please than to instruct. Accounts of this nature should for these reasons be received with the utmost wariness and circumspection.

Such a precaution might obviate that ungenerous propensity in numbers of our countrymen, to listen with an almost implicit belief, to the many false representations, or unfavourable reports, not only of the French, but of every other nation.

Foes as the English and the French are, from the nature of their government, the situation of their respective countries, and from other obvious causes, still we may, and therefore ought, to reconcile public rivalry with private concord.

There are so many amiable qualities in both nations, that it is a pity their political inveteracy should occasion a total oblivion of each other's worth ; that it should



suspend the mutual use of every beneficial ability, and urge them on to the exertion of those alone that are subservient to the purposes of reciprocal mischief and destruction.

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### C H A P. XXXII.

*On the Loss of Liberty in France—and in other Countries.*

SOME of our countrymen, hurried into indignation on observing the profound submission with which the French in general seem to bear the heavy yoke of bondage, have pronounced them, like the Cappadocians of old, unworthy of so noble a blessing as that of liberty, and perfectly adapted to the condition of slaves.

But humanity interposes, and forbids the passing so severe a sentence on any people. The causes that have effected the unhappy disparity between the political

cal circumstances of the English and those of the French, are such as will equally operate in all nations, inattention to the designs of those who first began to incroach on the rights of the people, or, perhaps, a forbearance to oppose them with vigour, from a notion that they would be attended by no bad consequences, and were only temporary evils that would cease of themselves.

To this passiveness of disposition we are to attribute the loss of liberty in France; not forgetting, however, sundry other no less efficient causes; such as an absurd contempt of the inferior classes, accompanied with the most profligate venality among the great, and equally senseless dissensions among those who represented the third estate. Their want of unanimity encouraged and enabled their superiors to betray their liberties into the hands of tyranny. These little foresaw that their own must, of consequence, partake of the same fate. They did not consider that

freedom is a prize which, in order to be enjoyed with safety, ought to be shared in common, and not partially restricted to any peculiar class ; no one part of the community, unassisted and unsupported by the other, being able to secure the possession of privileges it has no right to claim than as a property of the public.

Warned by the example which France now lays before us, it is hoped that we may learn how to beware of those rocks whereon its former freedom was wrecked. In the mean time it is our duty as men, rather to sympathise with the misfortune of the French, than to insult over them for having incurred it. One may even add, that, as members of the great family of mankind, we should divest ourselves of those narrow prepossessions that are the scandal of most nations ; and nobly wish that the French may extricate themselves from their present slavish situation. There is certainly no impropriety in this desire, the accomplishment of which would in  
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nowise prove detrimental to the happiness of Britain. The possession of liberty naturally cheers the mind, and elevates it to a degree of magnanimity that scorns to contribute to the calamity of others. Despotism, on the contrary, sours and irritates those who are subject to it, and impels them to that baseness of soul that rejoices in a diffusion of misery.

It were, at the same time, unjust to undervalue the French for an accident that befell the Greeks and Romans before them, and which we ourselves have not unfrequently been very near experiencing within this century and a half; to say nothing of the tyranny once exercised over our ancestors. Discord and corruption were the sources of those evils; a trite observation, but so commonly forgotten, or rather unattended to, that it cannot too often be repeated.

When either of these gains footing in a country, it is alone sufficient to work its total subversion in a short space. Like a



plague or epidemical distemper, which is always severest in the most strong and robust, it rages with a fierceness and violence proportionate to the talents of those whom it perverts. They become, in such a case, as destructive a nuisance to the public, as in others they prove its safety and protection.

The nations that have had the greatest reason to lament their intestine broils, are those where the heads and leaders of the opposite factions were men of eminent capacity; a truth deplorably verified in the most renowned states of antiquity; nor less authenticated by modern instances.

Through a perversion and prostitution of the most splendid abilities, England has often been on the brink of, and its rival France has at last fallen into, that political ruin which, though it annihilates not the name, nor the existence of a people, suffers them no longer to exist for themselves, nor to act in their national capacity.

Such

Such, indeed, is not only the situation of France, but that of far the greater part of Europe. Its inhabitants are now, through long prescription, accustomed to, and almost easy under, the most ignominious oppression. The ideas of that original equality which ought to preside in the institution of civil ordinances, are effaced by that abjectness of spirit with which the will and pleasure of sovereigns are considered as the standard of propriety. What is still worse, as it tends more directly to perpetuate these enormities, the military enforcement of all measures, just or illegal, by introducing that obedience which proceeds from fear, has extinguished those laudable motives for a conformity to the injunctions of government, that render compliance meritorious; an epithet it never can deserve unless it proceeds from a conviction of its consistency with reason.

But this is a praise applicable to a free people only; among whom real, genuine virtue, both public and private, bids fairest,

est, of course, to flourish most. Nothing can challenge that name while influenced by dread and pusillanimity, which are avowedly the ruling principle in all arbitrary states. Notwithstanding they may sometimes boast much regularity of lives and manners, and always the promptest submission to authority, yet, as this flows from compulsion, so the other is produced by the spiritless apprehension of giving offence to their superiors. It is in a land of liberty alone that men dare appear what they are. Hence, when their conduct is blameless in the moral departments of life, there is no more need to ascribe it to a fervility of temper, than to attribute the reverence of their rulers, and the willingness to applaud and execute their designs, to any other motive than a persuasion of the uprightness and capacity of the first, and the rectitude and utility of the last.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XXXIII.

*On the Causes of Emigration in France—Proneness of the French to overvalue themselves.*

THE French, though great travellers, are not so from that native inclination to see and speculate, which carries so many English gentlemen abroad. Interest alone is the allurements which calls forth, in such swarms, over every part of Europe, those Frenchmen whose talents and industry meet not with sufficient encouragement at home. A circumstance that often happens, much less from an overstock of population (as some of the admirers and partisans of France affect to insinuate) than from a barrenness of occupation and business, and the many other oppressive consequences of an arbitrary government. Of this, however, most of the French who are settled and have prospered in other countries, are not prone to complain with any violent degree of bitterness. This proceeds from an absurd partiality



partiality for whatever relates to their own. Neither are they inclined to acknowledge, that necessity drove them out of their country; which, if one were to believe many of them, they only quitted from motives of curiosity to view other parts.

But allowing for that national foible of vanity which leads almost every Frenchman to vent himself occasionally in these harmless effusions of self-importance, their ingenuity and application render them fully deserving of that protection and encouragement they meet with every where. It should be noticed to their honour, that they among them who thus become voluntary exiles, are far from being the least meritorious members of the community they have left, and often prove as worthy and useful as any in that where they have chosen to reside.

The countries whither the numerous emigrators from France most usually steer their course, are England and Holland,  
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the two states with whom the political intercourse of their court is the least friendly. This possibly, among other causes, is on account of their being the ready receptacle of all those French subjects whose discontents arising from religious considerations, or the difficulty of subsisting comfortably at home, excite them to take refuge in these seats of freedom, where they promise themselves, with so much reason, a more ample recompence for their labour, and a greater security for the privileges of human nature, than it is possible to enjoy in France. Notwithstanding the necessity of giving countenance to arts and manufactures, their professors in that kingdom, though in many respects highly encouraged, are occasionally taught, by flagrant instances of injustice and tyranny, that personal safety and property are but precarious blessings, while unsupported by that only solid foundation, the spirit of liberty resting on the confidence placed in the authority of the laws.

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It is remarkable that the French who have retired into Holland, and their descendants, are much longer in wearing away their national customs and notions than those who have settled in England, and always retain the use of their native tongue, which here is forgot in the second generation. The reason is, doubtless, the stronger political aversion our nation entertains for the French ; which renders their English posterity less fond of preserving what may remind them of an extraction wherein the principles they have imbibed from their education have taught them not to glory ; while, on the contrary, that antipathy not prevailing so powerfully in Holland, occasions a much more general retention of the language and manners of ancestors, whose country is even held in some degree of respect, as well as of awe.

Italy is a country with which the connections of French individuals are less frequent ; partly from the smaller influx  
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of its inhabitants among them, and partly from the little esteem in which they are held in France.

Spain is also in the same predicament, notwithstanding the consanguinity of the two royal houses; which has not been able to remove that dislike and prejudice the French and Spaniards mutually profess towards each other.

The Germans are a people whom the French greatly prefer to either of the two former; not on account of their originating from them (as every trace of similarity on that score is obliterated) but from the good opinion they justly cherish of their honesty and candour.

The Swiss too, are a nation whose probity and excellent character, in all respects, procures them the highest reputation and credit in France; where they possess immunities and privileges which render their condition there, preferable to that of the natives themselves.

It is among these two last, and two first nations, the French who have quitted  
their



their country have principally distributed themselves, to the no small emolument of their hospitable receivers. Their friendly treatment of these refugees has been rewarded with every benefit that can accrue to a state, from a fresh supply of industrious inhabitants perfectly conversant in those arts that constitute the happiness of society. They were, it is well known, the primitive establishers of many of those branches in trade and manufactures that make at present a capital figure in some of the countries to which they withdrew.

They among the French who can any ways afford to remain at home, are seldom desirous of going abroad. To whatever degree of extravagance an Englishman is apt to carry the idea of his country's superiority to all others, a Frenchman at least equals him in the veneration he expresses for his. *Il n'est qu'une France et un Paris*, "there is but one France and one Paris," is a saying in the mouth of every Frenchman, who is fully satisfied that

that the merit of France, and of the French, outweighs in every consideration that of every other country and every other people.

This is so unquestionably true, that when a Frenchman would praise any other part of the world, he does it by a gracious comparison with his own. If a compliment is intended to a foreigner, the French imagine they cannot pay him a greater than by comparing him to themselves. The celebrated Mademoiselle de l'Enclos, in a letter wherein she had occasion to mention an English lady, whom she much admired, styles her *toute Française*, "quite a French woman." Thus it is to this day with them all: they are convinced that when that has been said of any one, nothing else need be added in his commendation.

Without meaning to detract from the reality of their national worth, which is undoubtedly eminent, no unprejudiced person will deem it unjust to deny them

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any essential superiority over the English. They are peculiarly prone to make us the subject of their criticisms; but still in a manner that almost persuades one they are sensible we are rather successful rivals in the career of genius and glory; for they allow us unanimously the second place to themselves: while, at the same time, the literati of other countries, conversant in our language and well read in its productions, scruple not, in general, to pronounce in our favour against them.

Now by the same rule that Themistocles claimed the supereminence over all the Grecian captains, each of these ranking him next to himself, may not the English challenge the right of precedence from the French, granting them the second place, and other nations granting them the first?

If we even consult the sense of antiquity, we shall find the Romans declaring in favour of the inhabitants of this island in preference to those of Gaul. The passage

sage in Tacitus importive of this meaning has, indeed been strained by a French writer of eminence into a compliment from the Roman governor to those over whom he presided; but there is no clear and positive reason why it should be interpreted in that manner, which is far-fetched and supposititious, while the expression is clear and in no wise liable to ambiguity.

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## C H A P. XXXIV.

*On the Adulation of the French to Lewis the Fourteenth.*

**N**Otwithstanding the French are so given to arrogate an universal superiority over all nations, yet they are always ready to acknowledge the particular merit of individuals in any country, and even to bestow the most lavish praises on every work of genius or monument of art that is produced any where. But

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still there is a reservation in their encomiums, however ample and magnificent ; still they imagine a superlative and unequalled degree of perfection attends the similar exertions of capacity among themselves.

There is no province wherein human abilities are displayed that is excepted from these French claims : in the same manner as their politics have long been aiming, not at universal monarchy, which is a mere chimæra, but at a boundless, undue influence and ascendancy in every court and state, by labouring to establish a great belief and dread of their power ; so they would inculcate every where the persuasion that they are the most accomplished, most expert, and most intelligent of any people ; and that they prescribe the laws of wit, elegance, taste, and knowledge, wherever they can be said to flourish.

Hence that parade with which they mention their monarch, their court, their ministers,

ministers, their generals, their armies, in short, whatever has any relation with, or can in any light contribute to national grandeur. Hence that profusion of splendid epithets and ideas flowing from the pens of all their writers, ever since the days of Lewis the Fourteenth, under whom the mode began of considering themselves as the terror and envy, as well as the example of all Europe. His reign they deem the most glorious of any that ever fell to the lot of a king. They do not reflect that the successes he obtained in his beginnings were entirely owing to the disunion of some, the indolence of others, but chiefly to the disordered and ruinous situation that enemy was in, over whom only he may properly be said to have triumphed. Spain alone felt effectually the weight of his ambition, which was rather odious than formidable to his other neighbours. Even the Dutch, when they were driven to desperation, became an overmatch for all his politics and his

power, though the first were under the guidance of a Colbert, a Lionne, a Louvois, in the cabinet; and the latter under the conduct of a Turenne, a Conde, a Luxemburgh, in the field.

The French are, to this hour, weak enough to be proud of those events that were the least glorious and important either to himself or to his realm. They cite with the utmost exultation, what they call his trophies over Genoa and Algiers; as if bombarding a nest of pirates, and forcing an inconsiderable republic to submission, were feats of great might and prowess.

In the pacific, inglorious reign of our James the First, an English fleet performed as much on the coast of Barbary. Yet we did not expect the world to esteem it any stupendous transaction. In the days of the ambitious Lewis himself, Cromwell had established the reputation and dread of our naval power in a degree that should have taught the French more modesty. Let them recollect with what a style of authority

thority and command our fleets lorded it in his time, not over the petty sea-ports of Africa, nor the shores of a defenceless state, but throughout the whole Mediterranean; over the shores of Italy, of Spain, of Portugal, of France itself; acting every where with a spirit still greater than the force they had to support it; and carrying into resistless execution the dictates of that imperious ruler, to whose invincible pride no crown, no nation, ever paid more homage and deference than France did, in the midst of victories and advantages on every side, that had raised it to a situation of national strength it has never since experienced.

But what is peculiarly deserving of attention, is, that towards the close of this very Lewis's reign, when in consequence of an article in the pacification of Utrecht, the demolition of the fortifications and harbour of Dunkirk was to take place, the inhabitants of this town, known to be his favourite subjects, were yet suffered by



him to supplicate in form for mercy at the court of England: a fact which, though not trumpeted forth by our writers, throws the most humiliating light on the memory of a prince so haughty and overbearing, whenever he durst assume that character.

This affectation of annexing pomp and praise to all his proceedings infects the page of all French authors, from the meanest and most insignificant to those who have done the highest honour to his age and country. Even the great Bossuet not seldom descends from the sublimity that characterises his writings, in order to assume the degrading part of a professed panegyrist.

Neither should it be forgotten that the title of Great was given to and accepted by him long before his death, and at a time when he must have been conscious it could proceed from no other cause than the servility and adulation of his subjects. He had neither in his public nor private capacity, done any thing extraordinary  
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enough to merit such an appellation : a few institutions in favour of learning, and some gratifications conferred on persons of merit in the literary world, though deeds worthy of applause, were far from adequate to those claims of glory his admirers have thought him entitled to. His too visible approbation of such flattery derogates, in no small degree, from the good sense and discernment of which he is asserted to have possessed so large a share.

Let us consult an author, whose warmth of attachment, not to say partiality to his memory, is unquestionable, and who has exerted all his eloquence in illustrating his person and times. We shall find that many years before this subject employed his pen, he inadvertently dropped an expression that shewed he did not view, at that period, his future hero with an admiration, or rather a prepossession, equal to that which has since impelled him to bequeath to posterity so advantageous a picture of him,

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The expression alluded to, is that very remarkable one in the Letters on the English Nation by Voltaire: speaking of the respective encouragements given to literature in France and England, he mentions the renown acquired by Lewis the Fourteenth, as arising principally from his munificence in such instances; and concludes with these memorable words, *cette immortalité ne lui a pas coûté deux cens mille livres par an*, "This immortality did not cost him two hundred thousand livres (not ten thousand pounds sterling) a year."

A like strain of flattery to the throne has continued, ever since, and probably will never end till their constitution alters: an event to which such a debasement of their understanding will certainly not contribute. Nothing tends more directly and forcibly to keep a people in the most slavish subjection than this absurd prostitution of truth, in offering up a continual incense of praise where the  
reverse

reverse is manifestly due: but where, through fear, venality, and the many other motives that govern the pusillanimous and the corrupt, candour and veracity are condemned to silence, or appear only in disguise.

In conformity to this humour, the French, unable to go farther in their compliments to his successor, and unwilling to make them less than those his predecessors had been honoured with, thought proper to confer upon him the title of Invincible. This happened not long after he had attained to years of maturity, and had engaged in his first and most prosperous war (that which broke out on the death of the last king of Poland but one, and was begun on the side of France by the taking of Philipsburg.) This epithet, indeed, never became popular, but was nevertheless adopted by numbers of the court dependants, and became very common in print. Rollin himself does not disdain the use of it, in the performances he gave  
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to the public about that time. His modesty and excellent understanding could not preserve him from an infatuation, which seems epidemical among the French, that of extolling their sovereign for every virtue it were to be wished he possessed.

This is a maxim of no recent standing among them. La Fontaine, one of the most agreeable writers that ever nature produced for the entertainment and instruction of mankind, mentions it as an observance to which the highest attention ought always to be paid. He begins one of his fables by asserting that *on ne peut trop louer trois choses, Dieu, son roi, et sa maitresse*, "three things can never be too much praised, God, our king, and our mistress."

An Englishman, however, will not hesitate to affirm that kings ought never to be praised unless they deserve it. In which case, the less we admit of fulsome-ness in the compliments paid to their good deeds, the more of credit they obtain from  
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the judicious, the only part of society of whose favourable opinion the truly sensible and the truly great can be desirous.

Some, indeed, have fancied that by commending princes for their imaginary qualities, the consciousness and shame of their real deficiency, would excite their endeavours to acquire them. But they who reason in this manner, may be referred to the invariable concurrence of facts, which unanswerably testify that were this an effectual method of curing princes of their vices, the worst of them ought to have been the best; as none, during their lives, have met with more adulation than those whom history represents in the blackest colours.

It is no less true than fatal, that when applause is promiscuously given to such as have no right to it, as well as to those who have, the most cogent motive to deserve it is taken away. The prospect of a particular distinction, which is the most powerful incentive to a lofty mind, is destroyed,  
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and nothing left but that equality from which the desire of emerging is the principle and foundation of all heroic actions.

One may, however, without deviating from truth, acknowledge, that the personal mildness and humanity of the late king of France, justly endeared him to his subjects, and procured him an appellation more suitable to the events of his reign than the former, the title of *Bien Aimé*, "the Well-beloved," conferred upon him on his recovery from an illness, during which the universal solicitude of his people proved how much he reigned in their hearts. This title did him certainly the most honour, not only from the greater propriety, but from the superior value of it; since they who may have the best claim to that of Invincible are, from the vicissitude of things, liable to lose it in an instant; while neither prosperity can add to, nor adversity detract from the other.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XXXV.

*On the Ideas of the French, respecting the Courage of the English, and of other Nations.*

THE French, in their allowances of merit to the English nation, raise it by a studied gradation above the level of all others, and just to a single degree below their own: an instance of this, among many, is that of military courage, which, in their opinion, they possess in the most eminent degree.

They have defined and appreciated it with that peculiar nicety, which characterises the various judgments they form of their neighbours. In the Germans it is rather an absence of fear, or a heavy insensibility of danger. In the Spaniards, a perseverance and steadiness of resolution in pursuing what they have begun. In the Italians, a fertility of genius in discovering the weak side of an enemy, and concealing their own; and in improving  
every



every opportunity by artifice and stratagem. In the English, an intrepidity of soul that sees and encounters all difficulties. But in themselves, a spirit of determinate valour, acting by rule, and equally distant from rashness and timidity.

Their notions of our courage, as appears by some of their writers, are not, however, quite uniform. Sometimes it is a ferocity of nature, like that of carnivorous animals who delight in scenes of blood. Thus Flechier represents it, in his celebrated funeral oration on Marshal Turenne. Speaking of the victory he obtained over the Spanish army near Dunkirk, through the assistance of the English, he says of these *qu'une ferocité naturelle acharnoit sur les vaincus*; we have no word in our language of adequate energy with *acharnoit*, which the orator has selected to describe the savage eagerness with which our native ferocity prompted us to deal destruction among the vanquished.

Voltaire,

Voltaire, in his poem on the battle of Fontenoi, confers the same epithet on English courage, in that well known line *la ferocité le cede à la vertu*, "ferocity yields to virtue." But, as if he was conscious of a misrepresentation, and yet averse totally to retract his words, he politely adds a note in the margin, excepting from the imputation of ferocity the whole corps of English officers, who, says he, *sont aussi genereux que les notres*, "are as generous (humane is the meaning) as ours." The poor soldiers it seems were not so much worth his attention.

Monsieur Duclos, an ingenious and able writer, is not less guilty of prejudice in his elegant history of Lewis the Eleventh of France. He begins it by saying the victory at Poitiers was won by English desperation over French valour, *ou la valeur Françoisse ceda aux desespoir des Anglois*: words that fully prove he had not sufficiently considered the behaviour of the English, and the conduct of their

trious commander on that memorable day; wherein the cool generalship of the one, and the amazing resolution of the others, are obvious to all impartial readers.

The only French author who seems to have truly understood and described that species of bravery belonging to our countrymen is Father Orleans, the Jesuit. Treating of our civil wars in the reign of Charles the First, he has these remarkable words, *La guerre se fit vivement selon le genie de la nation, brusque, impetueuse, donnant peu à l'art et decidant tout par des batailles, ou l'on fait plus de cas du nombre et de la vigueur des combattans que de la science des capitaines*: "the war was waged with the vigorous spirit peculiar to that nation; whose bold, impetuous disposition pays but little regard to military artifice, and decides all by set battles, where the number and courage of the men are more valued than the skill of their commanders."

As war is a department wherein the French esteem themselves the instructors  
of

of all nations, it was thought necessary to expatiate on that quality which is the foundation of all military glory, personal valour. In the science of exerting it with propriety, they imagine no people are comparable to them: with how much justice they challenge this supremacy let others determine. Suffice it here, that their pretensions have been stated, together with the respective ideas they entertain of the several European nations in this matter.

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## C H A P. XXXVI.

*Of the Ferociousness and Cruelty unjustly ascribed to the English.*

**I**N the mean time the French not only tax the English with ferociousness in the field, but carry their accusations into our private quarrels between individuals. These however one may, with great truth, affirm to be much more harmless in



general among the English, than any nation upon earth. A bloody nose, or a black eye, are usually the worst consequences of a fray among the inferior sort in England; while abroad, the most atrocious murders are often committed on the slightest occasions.

It were an invidious task to enumerate the many countries where these enormities are daily practised, and where the guilty meet with an impunity but ill agreeing with that character of humanity which those nations assume to themselves in preference to us. It may be added, religion itself is perverted, and made conducive to the protection and encouragement of crimes, by the shelter which a church, or a cloyster, or even the threshold of either affords. In some places, the very laying hold or touch of a priest's, or a noble's garment becomes an immediate safeguard to the vilest murderer.

We have no such sanctuaries of iniquity in England. Though, from the native

tive manliness and bold spirit of our common people, their altercations are frequently attended with trials of bodily strength and dexterity, yet we very seldom hear of a *coup de couteau*, "a stab with a knife," being given even among the lowest dregs of our populace. Their natural inclination to generosity is visible in that solicitude they express to see what is called fair play between the combatants. Very different is this from what is seen in some places abroad. On the arising of a broil, every body retires, lest they should be forced legally to interfere in a scene which they are conscious bids fair to be fatal, from the bloody disposition of the parties concerned.

Cruelty, one may impartially aver, is no national vice of the English; and the French are very culpable in attributing it to us. Not they alone however, but their southern neighbours, join in the imputation; and ascribe the cause of it to

our feeding so much on flesh meat, which they pretend fills us with sanguinary humours, and a gloomy atrabilious temper.

But facts are the best arguments in our favour. As assassinations are much more common, and much less in horror among them, it is a most audacious and most intolerable presumption to lay that to our charge, of which they are guilty themselves in a degree that suffers no comparison.

The expression of some warmth is justifiable, when we reflect on the unjust usage our character often meets with on this account from prejudiced foreigners. They seem to forget that execrable practice of private, hidden revenge, which prevailed so shockingly in Italy at the end of the fifteenth, and the beginning of the sixteenth century: when the most insidious barbarities became the vogue; and enmity and rancour had daily recourse to poison or the dagger: enormities that  
found

found their way into France, into Spain, and into the Low Countries, during a great part of the sixteenth century.

Nothing of this nature was then known in England. Though religious fury lighted up some fires in Smithfield, they were but sparks when compared with the dreadful conflagrations that were blazing abroad: one of those infernal commissioners of destruction, the duke of Alva (a delegate entirely worthy of his master Philip the Second of Spain) had the daring inhumanity to boast, in open court, that he had been the butcher of no less than eighteen thousand of his fellow-creatures, sacrificed by the hand of the executioner.

In a more enlightened age (a circumstance that renders the transaction equally more criminal and surprising), in the memory of some who are but recently laid in their graves, the French ministry, under Lewis the Fourteenth, acted with an atrocity not in the least inferior, in those



dreadful orders of ruin and devastation twice issued against the Palatinate: an event that ought to cover with shame every Frenchman that exults in the politeness of that monarch and his court; while it is, at the same time, a fatal proof that civility in exterior manners is reconcilable with the utmost barbarity of disposition.

Not content with this inequitable representation of our countrymen in matters of weightier moment, the French scruple not to inveigh against our very pastimes and diversions, which they depict as favouring of the same ferocity.

True it is we had once a bear garden; and little more than a century ago, followed some sports rather uncouth and rude. We also, not long since, encouraged prize-fighting, and boxing; the latter indeed is not quite out of date, any more than cock-fighting, wherein too many among us express, it must be confessed, a very ignominious delight.

All

All this undoubtedly is blameable, but still affords the French no cause for triumph over us even in those respects, cock-fighting excepted (which for the honour of humanity one may hope will not long subsist): the other scandalous practices have entirely ceased, or at least are discountenanced in such a manner as permits them no longer to remain a national reproach. While the French, who boast of their aversion to fights of cruelty, have frequent, nay, we may fairly say weekly, exhibitions of blood and carnage between the fiercest animals they can procure.

It is particularly worthy of notice on these occasions, that so well are they aware of the pleasure such a pastime creates in the minds of the spectators, that they are careful to specify in the advertisements, which are fixed up like play bills, the number and species of wild beasts designed for this public entertainment.

What

What is more remarkable, and serves to denote how much stress is to be laid on their pretensions to superior humanity, is their minute exactness in ascertaining, in these bills, which and how many are to fight till death, and the degree of rage and fury it is expected and hoped they will exert in their defence. These advertisements conclude with the following words, added by way of N. B. *on espere qu'ils se defendront cruellement*, "it is hoped they will make a desperate defence;" if, indeed, the term *cruellement* may not admit of a still more invidious translation.

Will the French, after this, brand us with a vice of which it is presumed sufficient proofs have been adduced they bear a much heavier load? But then perhaps, they will say that such amusements are only for the *canaille*, "the rabble," a term the fashionable part of the nation bestows very willingly on all the remainder. But were this true, as that said *canaille* is the bulk of the people,  
from

from whose ideas and manners we feel, as it were, the pulse of nations; is not this a clear acknowledgment, though an undesigned one, that the temper of the French is by no means so civilised and refined as they wish the world to believe.

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## C H A P. XXXVII.

*On the French Language.*

**D**IVERS circumstances concur to confirm the French in the persuasion of their being the model of all nations. The principal one is the perpetual concourse of foreigners in their country. This they interpret as a tacit homage paid to their superior talents, and an intent to profit by their study and imitation.

Another evidence no less convincing, in their opinion, how greatly Europe thinks of them, is the vast diffusion of their language, which they deem, from this argument, the most perfect and beautiful one extant.



extant. The most moderate speak of it as the best adapted to the use of mankind. In their different appropriations of the several European tongues to those subjects for which they seem peculiarly calculated, they always contrive to insinuate that a preference is due to their own. They forget not, on these occasions, to cite the famous apophthegm of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, that great connoisseur of men and things; and to allege his authority in support of the pre-excellence of their language for the purposes of social intercourse.

Were the French as little diffused as other modern languages, a perfect knowledge of which is seldom met with (except in the natives), it might seem presumptuous in any but a Frenchman to pronounce on the merits or demerits of the French.

But as that tongue is now become familiar in every court; is deemed a necessary appendage of polite education, and  
used

used for commercial correspondence in every part of Europe; it is now so universally taught and studied grammatically, that it may be confidently asserted there are foreigners of different countries as critically conversant in it as the French themselves. Hence the merits of that language have been examined and ascertained with more accuracy and precision than those of any other.

We may, therefore, venture to affirm that the French is rather an agreeable than expressive language; and, like the nation itself, whose freedom of spirit is evaporated, since the change of its government, during the course of the last century, has lost in strength what it has gained in politeness. They who have brought it to its boasted purity have been too busy in polishing it.

Amyot, Charron, Montaigne, Rabelais, who preceded this reformation, are certainly more nervous in their expressions, from the freedom and copiousness of their style,

file, than any of the subsequent writers. Neither is it uncommon to hear judicious Frenchmen lament that unnecessary attention to the nicety of diction, which as frequently destroys manliness of thinking, as it may tend to purify any idiom. The principal merit of a language ought to consist in the force and abundance of its terms, rather in a studied cautiousness to admit none that bear not the stamp of the most elaborate refinement.

The French, language, however soft and harmonious to those who are perfect masters of it, is quite otherwise to strangers. Its pronunciation is faulty in the last excess, as almost half the letters are suppressed in speaking; very unlike the Spanish or Italian in this respect, where every letter goes for something, and is not made a mere expletive on paper: an absurdity which we ought impartially to acknowledge is often the case of the English as well as of the French.

Another

Another defect of this latter is, that duplicity of meaning which accompanies some expressions of the most common use; and by the bare transposition of a word quite alters their signification.

Upon the whole, the French seems to be a language of phrases, the English a language of words. The former, like a person of an artful, insinuating address, deals much in hints and circumlocutions: the latter, like a plain, blunt man, avoids prolixity, and comes to the point at once. The one seems best adapted for company and conversation, the other for business and dispatch.

#### C H A P. XXXVIII.

*On the Precipitation of Speech, and Loquacity of the French.*

**A**N obvious particularity in the French, is their prodigious quickness and impetuosity of speech. They seem



seem always impatient to have uttered their thoughts, and engaged, as it were, in a reciprocal strife who shall speak the fastest.

This leads one naturally to take notice of another mark of the disparity subsisting between the character of the English and that of the French, the rapidity of decision so discernible in the one, and the hesitation to pass judgment so remarkable in the other.

Which of these opposite dispositions is applicable to the French, no one will be at a loss to guess, who has been much conversant among them. It cannot escape observation with how much promptitude they are apt, in their discourses, to settle in a moment things of the highest consequence.

Impelled by a vivacity, or rather indeed, a levity of temper that appears to be inseparable from most of them, they seldom abstain from declaring their opinion in a violent precipitate manner, manifestly exclusive of premeditation.

This propensity to judge and decide of things with so much expedition is equally the failing of old and young. The *toujours vif* belongs to both, as well as the *toujours gai*. Notwithstanding old age in France is generally very agreeable, from the liveliness it possesses in common with youth, yet it certainly is not endued with that staidness and gravity which the weight of years usually impresses on mankind in other countries.

We find their coffee-houses, and other resorts of that nature, plentifully provided with these elderly orators; whose volubility of speech is not exceeded by the youngest of their audience; and who, if they do not display much eloquence, are however indefatigable in their harangues.

From the antecedent causes it happens no less frequently that, unable to contain their eagerness and agitation of mind, within bounds, the French are shamefully subject to transgress the rules of good breeding, and to interrupt each other in

so vociferous a manner, that altercation rather than discourse seems to be the purport of their meeting.

It is observable that in the forementioned places the political news of the day, regarding domestic transactions (a text which with us always produces an ample comment), seldom employs so much of their conversation as that concerning foreign parts. One would be tempted to think them more inclined to appear well informed of what passes abroad than in their own country.

The danger there is in delivering one's thoughts freely on the affairs of their government is a sufficient motive to carry their investigations elsewhere; but there is another of almost equal weight with so vain a people, that boundless appetite for admiration and applause which induces them to labour all they can to seem profoundly conversant in matters remote from the knowledge or information of such as have not seen or read much.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XXXIX.

*On the vain boasting Disposition of the French—on English Travellers.*

A Species of ambition very prevalent among the French is that of being considered as travellers, and examiners of mankind. Some whose excursions are very circumscribed will readily magnify them for that purpose.

One frequently meets with persons, who, having perhaps, in the course of business or casual opportunities, spent a few weeks or days in the adjacent countries, or possibly on their borders only, will stretch the journey to a length sufficient to have seen all those things of which their discourses represent them as witnesses.

This exaggerating humour urges them into the most impudent fictions. Not satisfied with pretending to have visited places they never saw, but of which nevertheless they give ample descriptions,

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they



they will often enter with the most intrepid assurance on the chapter of characters; and if the relator's situation in life be creditable enough to admit the supposition, he will enumerate the civilities he has received from, and the intimacies he has contracted with, names of the first importance in the places he has mentioned.

But this is not all. As the glory of a Frenchman is not complete unless he has been engaged more or less in intrigues, he is generally copious on this subject, and will sometimes select for the object of his amours precisely those persons of whom no man will believe any thing dishonourable, who happens to be of their acquaintance. In the career of his imaginary adventures, a Frenchman of this stamp willingly makes free with female names, in order to establish his fame in the regions of gallantry.

This is a field wherein a Frenchman delights to expatiate. But as he knows no limits to his confidence, he is apt to  
 stumble

stumble on subjects that unluckily create discussions of which his impetuous vivacity rendered him rather unaware.

France of all countries furnishes the most frequent and fatal proofs of the danger incurred by traducing absent characters: the impropriety of meddling with them so daringly, though it may strike the French as forcibly as others upon reflection, is not so cautiously adverted to by them as by individuals in other nations. They are usually much more on the reserve in what regards each other's personal or domestic circumstances or occurrences. In France this unaccountable propensity to pry into them, is joined to the most impatient, restless indiscretion, in publishing to the world every disparaging story, true or false, which the teller has either heard or invented. This often exposes him to very serious eclairs-cissements with the friends of the parties thus calumniated; but on no occasions more frequently than those where a man

boasts of favours from the fair sex. Favours which the French are accused of being prouder to publish than to receive, when distance of places sets them out of the reach of danger. The truth is, that rather than be thought strangers to female predilection, too many of them will act with very little scruple: not to forget those more harmless boasters, who, in the wantonness of their imagination, create beings that never existed. They describe them, however, of importance enough to derive some credit for having been honoured with their smiles and good graces.

Though characters of this stamp are found among other nations, especially those in whom a tour to France is accounted an appendage of genteel education, yet that country is indisputably the native soil where such beings mostly flourish, and whence the science of assuming airs of gallantry has been successfully propagated through many parts of Europe. It is indeed a complaint of long standing, that

swarms

swarms of travellers seem to visit France with no other intent than to form a practical collection of those ways and manners that render the French and their imitators equally disagreeable and ridiculous.

Complaints of this nature are applicable to many of our English gentlemen on their return from those countries, where so much of their money has been expended, and so little credit obtained, or rather, to speak with propriety, so much disgrace incurred by extravagances, that not only dishonour the perpetrators, but the country to which they belong.

General ideas of nations are always formed from the character of their itinerant members. The conduct and behaviour of these, is, therefore, most equitably liable to be called to a strict and severe account, by that public to which they are often so detrimental and injurious.

Travellers ought to consider themselves as representatives of their countrymen abroad. No individuals should be per-



mitted to go forth incapable, or what is worse, unwilling to act in such a manner as may add to the reputation of the community to which they belong.

But these are maxims to which the practice of the times bears no conformity or deference. It is the too common remark of foreigners that, were it not for the figure this nation makes in its collective capacity; the influence it exerts throughout the world by its power; and the prosperity it enjoys at home, through the wisdom of its government, together with the long established character it possesses of sense, courage, and genius equal to any people, all these advantages would remain a secret to the rest of Europe, if no medium remained to arrive at the knowledge of them, but that of our countrymen who shew themselves in foreign parts. Few of them display any other proofs than those of our national opulence. Excepting such exterior marks of respect as riches will every where command,

mand, they obtain little of that regard which is due to intrinsic merit. On the contrary, they leave not unfrequently the most disadvantageous impressions of their countrymen, through the irregularities and follies in the commission of which some of them seem even to glory.

Need we, however, wonder at this when it is impartially considered on what a strange plan many of our travelling systems are formed? Is it consistent with the end proposed by visiting foreign countries and nations, to send out a raw, young lad, whose mind is uninformed, or at most but opening to the dawn of civil life, and whose academical knowledge, when, through happiness of parts and education, he has attained a proper share, wants that confirmation which is only gained by assiduity in the latter stages of youth? Besides, is there nothing to be learned at home, previous to his appearance among strangers abroad, who have a right, and will exercise it, to examine whether he  
 knows

knows enough of his own country to profit by what he may see of others ?

How ridiculous is the appearance of these juvenile rambles in the company of judicious, intelligent foreigners. While their good sense moves them to pity a young gentleman whose education is so miserably superintended, it must, at the same time, excite their indignation at maxims so destructive of all the purposes of travelling ; if the name of maxims be applicable to that absurd rage of thrusting mere youths of no experience into a strange world, at a time of life when the passions are in their most uncontrollable state, and where every temptation will be thrown in their way that need or avidity can suggest : from the rapacious courtier to the indigent sharper ; from the high-born fashionable lady, of whose dexterity at play they become the victims, to the less honourable, though not more contemptible female,  
for

for whose prostitution they pay so excessive a price.

How can it, indeed, happen otherwise, when simplicity is sent forth to encounter with artifice? when, what is still more unpardonable, in lieu of an expert guide to lead him safe through all this maze of danger, it happens too frequently that no other assistance is given him than of a person as new as himself to the scene they are entering upon, and much less deserving the style of governor than of companion. He is literally so, in the numberless instances of imposition and slight he undergoes in the society of his youthful partner; to whom not rarely his only superiority is that of years. Though he may have employed them in the most unblemished discharge of parochial or collegial functions at home, they do not assuredly enable him to assume the direction of a young traveller, whose only assistant ought to be one who has preceded him in the arduous path he is going to tread, and has thoroughly



roughly seen, and perfectly knows what he is about to shew to his pupil.

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## C H A P. XL.

*On the Solitude of the French for Dress and Appearance.*

**L**A Fontaine says, *Se croire un personnage est fort commun en France*, “to think one’s self a person of consequence is a common thing in France.”

In some countries, in Italy for instance, they delight in high sounding phrases, and promiscuously bestow titles of so much grandeur and magnificence, even upon individuals in the commonest stations of life, that hardly any remain to confer on persons of real dignity and importance.

But the vanity of the French takes another turn. It is not so much in appellations, as in being reputed persons of

weight and worth, they find a comfort and satisfaction that buoys them up above their situation, however irksome. Such a persuasion is almost an adequate measure of indemnity for those shocks and mortifications they may inwardly experience. They are generally apt to reckon little of these, provided they are known to themselves only.

The French are, both in their own country and abroad, remarkably industrious in finding ways and means to conceal the narrowness of their circumstances, and to make a figure, which, if not splendid, is yet decent.

Thus far, indeed, they are not in the least censurable; since it is undoubtedly no less allowable than conducive to our interest to make a shew of prosperity, even in the worst of circumstances. Nothing more betrays a feeble mind than to pay a needless homage to adversity, by putting on its livery, a sorrowful countenance, and a fordid appearance; which only sub-  
ject

ject the wearer to the sneers and contempt of the more fortunate.

Daily experience teaches, that to assume an air of dejection, and to manifest by a meanness of garb, the unfriendliness of fortune, is no invitation to her favours. She is not unaptly classed with the female list of imaginary beings; as she smiles so frequently on a mere outside, and is so neglectful and slighting of such as forget to set that off to advantage.

Of this truth the French are so well apprised, that no people carry their solicitude for personal decorum in dress so far as they do; a fact that is evident enough, when we reflect how carefully they adhere to all the prevailing fashions.

An earnest attention to externals is, however, of no trivial use in a country where it is esteemed a proof of taste; where a man is sure to find so much more admiration on that account, than he can promise himself any where else; and where, in short, unless the appearance of an individual

dividual be genteel and advantageous, his good qualities are in imminent danger of being overlooked or undervalued.

From these motives an individual in France, whose income will but just support him, willingly consents to debar himself of enjoyments which to an Englishman are far from being indifferent, those of a plentiful table, in order to reserve a sufficiency that may enable him to display an elegant variety of cloaths. This finery renders him an object worthy of attention with the great vulgar as well as the small; and excites a desire of his society in many who think that an intimate knowledge and participation of his taste, is an improvement not to be neglected.

This skill in the science of apparel is therefore by no means a barren acquisition among the French. If the possessor's rank or profession be not a disgrace to his associates, he will meet with many of a condition much above his own. Exclusive of the civilities and welcome he receives in the company  
of



of his betters, he will, if attentive, not unfrequently be favoured with such opportunities as may, through vigilance and discretion, be made highly conducive to his welfare in the more serious concerns of life.

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## C H A P. XLI.

*On the Dexterity of the French in promoting their Interest—Propensity to Self-praise and vain Glory—Artfulness of the Shopkeepers.*

**T**HE grounds whereon a Frenchman erects the system of his vanity are usually his connections and his capacity. The latter he is never wanting to insinuate is the promoter of the former. To do his countrymen justice, they strive with uncommon diligence to make good their insinuation.

The French are remarkable for the figure many of them make in other countries. Why they should meet with such  
good

good fortune, has often been enquired and complained of by those who could not discover that superiority of merit in them which only ought to command it. It must be acknowledged, that merit is not the sole motive that engages the predilection they so often obtain, to the prejudice of others whose worth ought certainly to preponderate in the scale of esteem and favour.

But our astonishment ceases when we reflect that there is not, perhaps, a set of men upon earth, more dexterous and expert than the French in the talent *de se faire valoir*, "the art of shewing themselves to the best advantage." They are, beyond all people, versed in the science of making a little merit go a great way; and gifted with an œconomy, in this respect, admirably calculated for serving effectually the most material purposes.

We daily see that with very moderate parts, but a wonderful sagacity in employing them, the French, in almost every  
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situation

situation they are placed, are able, if any opportunity is afforded them, either to extricate themselves from difficulties, or to advance forward in the road of prosperity.

This is owing to a pliability of humour, through means of which they wind themselves imperceptibly into the favour and benevolence of their superiors; and not less to a circumspection and watchfulness in eagerly seizing those auspicious moments wherein a man's abilities will come in a propos, and fully suit the occasion which invites their appearance and exertion.

Aware that talents, however slender, are not denied their season of utility to the owner; and that men are much more wanting to opportunities, than opportunities are wanting to them, the French are not apt to refuse the slightest, and apparently the most inconsiderable. Their practice shews them to be strict observers of the maxim, which teaches that fortune will not be wanting to us, if we are not  
wanting

wanting to ourselves. No men perhaps more frequently experience, that the value of emergencies is only known to those who improve them; and that to neglect any may be to lose the most favourable that ever destiny intended to throw in our way.

Actuated, therefore, in a warmer degree by that impulse which renders mankind careful and zealous for their interest, the French are less liable to miss the lucky, decisive hour than most others; as they are ever ready, at the least warning, to call forth that alertness which is the chief cause of success in the prosecution of our designs.

Such are the means by which they triumph over their competitors, whose deserts, however greater, for want of such a timely exhibition, remain buried in obscurity. The talents of such men become as useless to the proprietors, as unknown to those who might and would employ and reward their capacity, in preference



to that of the former, if they were equally solicitous and active in displaying it.

The art of varnishing himself is another peculiarity in a Frenchman. While he loses no opportunity of giving vent to the good opinion he cherishes of himself, he is at the same time attentive to do it in such wise as to convince others it is not without foundation, and the concurrence of proper judges, that he challenges their esteem.

All this, therefore, is done by way of insinuation; by hints and inferences which, though they fairly come home to the point he has in view, seem, as it were, to absolve him from the vice of parade and ostentation, by leaving others to draw the consequences from the premises he lays before them. By these indirect means he contrives to represent himself in a favourable light, and yet to preserve the mask of modesty in the midst of the most fulsome self-praise.

This description, though not unapplicable to other individuals, belongs peculiarly

culiarly to the French, such principally as from motives best known to themselves, have chosen to abandon their country; but more especially those emigrating gentlemen whom pretended affairs of honour have expelled from France: a pretext usually pleaded with an assurance that would tempt one to believe it the most honourable inducement, in their notions, to engage assistance and respect.

Such are also the majority of those swarms of idlers at Paris, whose scanty, miserable pittance cannot urge them to embrace the means of bettering their condition; and who seem almost as well satisfied in thinking and representing themselves deserving of fortune's favours as those who enjoy them. These are a species of mortals most of the principal cities in France abound with. Though not without their fellows in some other parts, (in Italy and Spain for instance, particularly the last), they may justly retain the title of Originals.

We must not omit another considerable fund of motives to excite a Frenchman's vanity.

This treasure of vain glory consists of every article belonging to splendor, gaiety, and profusion: the verbal display of these is a pastime few Frenchmen have philosophy enough to deny themselves: no people so much delight in regaling their audience with an endless catalogue of their domestics, equipages, horses, houses, furniture, and every other appurtenance of that nature.

It must, nevertheless, be acknowledged that these subjects, however insignificant in themselves, are usually introduced with so much art as not to seem out of place; and are sometimes managed with so much dexterity as even to afford amusement.

Whoever means to become acceptable to the generality of the fashionable sort in France, must be cautious not to appear disgusted at these narrations. Though often tedious to the uninterested, they are  
always

always considered by the narrator, as marks of the pleasure he receives from the company and acquaintance of those to whom he behaves in this communicative manner, and as a convincing earnest of the friendly footing on which he places them.

A traveller whose intention is to form those connections in families that are the most infallible method of discovering the real, genuine character of a nation, must lay his account to meet in France with trials of his temper in this kind of entertainment. A repetition will happen much oftener than he is aware of, from their propensity to give their familiar visitors precise information of whatever concerns them, and to dwell not only on material, but on trifling domestic affairs, beneath all regard and notice but their own. They seem to forget how insupportably ridiculous they become to those who by the laws of civility are condemned to assist with patience at such an insipid rehearsal.



We may conclude, what has been said on the subject of French vanity, with an observation which will shew to what absurd lengths the French are apt to carry this their grand national foible; and how industrious they are in drawing resources and helps from it to conceal or disguise as well their political as national defects.

When Englishmen, who have been at Paris, happen to mention, as well they may, the poverty and mean appearance of the shops there, in comparison of those in London, the French never fail to make answer that it is not customary for a man in trade, however abundantly supplied, to expose to public view his whole stock of merchandise, lest he should excite envy on account of his riches.

But nothing is easier than to refute this assertion; the falshood and futility of it are evident, when we reflect that of all people in trade, the French are notoriously the most vaunting and boastful; their shopkeepers especially, who are for ever  
haranguing

haranguing with the most pompous energy of words, on the immense quantity of goods they have in their stores ; which is certainly as ready a way to make envious neighbours talk as the former.

But were they as silent on this head as they are talkative, is it credible that men so fond of appearing opulent, would be at the pains to debar themselves of such an incentive to vanity, as a full shop is so manifestly to its French keeper ? His whole behaviour is a clear indication how desirous he is of seeming well provided. The moment you enter his doors, he prefaces all business by a detail of whatever he has to sell ; sparing no encomiums on every article ; nor forgetting, at the same time, to let you know, by way of episode, how many persons of fashion honour him with their custom.

He then proceeds to lay before you whatever he thinks you may be induced to purchase by the allurements of his descriptions and praises ; and what with fair words,

words, what with flattery and cozening, he draws you on insensibly to bargains of which you never dreamed upon your first entrance.

If the men are expert on these occasions, the French women are still more. When a young foreigner comes in their way, they perfectly understand the method of fleecing him. They begin by inveigling him with those blandishments, of which they are such consummate mistresses. When they have sufficiently played their fascinations upon him, his purse lies, in a manner, at their mercy. He is easily prevailed upon to expend much more than he intended, and to pay their own price for things, which, exclusive of his not wanting them, are sold to him at a most iniquitous profit; *le tout en conscience*, "all at a reasonable conscientious rate;" a phrase of which no one can deny the shopkeepers in France make a most audacious and shameful prostitution.

CHAP.

## C H A P. XLII.

*On the respective Conveniences of Living, and Advantages of Climate, in France and England—Italian Comedy at Paris.*

NO people are proner to vaunt of the superior pleasures and conveniences enjoyed in their country than the French. They are surpris'd when they meet with any who differ in opinion; being fully satisfied they surpass in *agremens*, "attractions," every nation upon earth; and that a residence among them is the *summum bonum* of life, from the innumerable ways and means their country, as well as its inhabitants, afford to render it supremely comfortable.

It were unjust to deny the uncommon excellence of both. But their pretended superiority to all others in the science of heightening every enjoyment of life, is far from being so clear as many of our own travellers would insinuate, from  
ground-



groundless partiality, or with a view to appear more discerning than their neighbours.

The conveniences of dwelling, or travelling particularly, are not comparable to those in England: and what they most descant upon, the article of provisions, is not preferable any farther than cookery may be thought to improve it.

But the merit they claim on this account is very problematic. Many a Frenchman allows the much greater salubrity of our's, and most of our own countrymen are fonder of their own dishes, even in France, where they indulge at a cheap rate in all those culinary refinements for which the French are so famous.

Neither have they great cause to boast in other matters. The furniture of their houses, for instance (those of the genteeler classes excepted) is mean and penurious, and generally displays an affectation of ornament and finery that ill atones  
for

for the wretchedness of the materials they are made of, and as ill supplies the want of neatness. In this we manifestly surpass them, and bear its absence with much impatience. It is with difficulty our English travellers are able to put up with the slovenliness prevailing throughout most parts of France. The poverty of the people is no sufficient plea for the variety of uncleanly occurrences one is offended with at every turn.

The French, perhaps, may tell us it is worse in some of the adjacent countries; but that affords them no excuse: the less, indeed, as their own is much more frequented by foreigners; in whose eyes they are desirous of appearing defective in nothing from which praise can be derived.

An essential disadvantage in the article of dwelling is that in most houses there is hardly any thing, beside the bare walls, appropriated to the use of such as hire them. In England, what with wainscot and papering; what with closets, and  
other

other beneficial accommodations, the commonest houses are half furnished when entered upon; and what they contain is finished in a manner that requires but few additions to make the whole completely agreeable to sight.

The fact is, that the luxury of the inferior classes among the French consists chiefly, if not almost wholly, in the costliness of their wearing apparel, and other personal appurtenances. Herein they study to be as splendid as their circumstances will enable them. Provided they can make a gay figure abroad, they are not over solicitous of appearances any more than of realities at home.

Thus, while richness of dress was, till of late years, considered in England as the peculiar privilege of persons of distinction and genteel callings, in France it serves to confound all ranks, and to destroy that visible gradation in society, which is highly proper, if not absolutely necessary, as much for the suppression of absurd pride

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and pernicious expensiveness, as for the reward and encouragement of superior talents and merit.

The French are exceedingly apt to transgress the bounds of truth and moderation, in the frequent comparisons they delight to make between the climate of England and that of France, extolling theirs beyond measure, and depreciating ours in a style so injurious, as to misrepresent it entirely to such as are unacquainted with the partiality of their descriptions. They are sometimes so violent on this subject as to occasion a suspicion of their being too much influenced by aversion and malevolence.

Without entering into a dissertation upon the respective qualities of either climate, it may with reason be presumed, that there is little, if any difference, between those of London and Paris. The nature and disposition of the elements seem much the same in both places. The mixture of all the seasons in one day is as fre-



frequent in the latter as in the former; there is as often a sunshiny morning, a clouded mid-day, a rainy afternoon, and a fair evening. Cold and heat are as expeditiously successive, and no less unseasonable; and the aspect of the heavens is, on the whole, as unsettled and variable. We may even add that the part of the year which lasts the longest there, is winter, no less, if not more severe, than at London, and equally, at least, attended with frost and snow.

Nothing, therefore, could be more impertinent than the affectation of a Frenchman, who, writing from London to his countryman at Paris, bid him give his compliments to the sun, not having seen him a long time. This came well enough from Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador here, from whom the Frenchman borrowed it, and who certainly had a right to find a difference between the climate of London and that of Madrid: but it by no means became a native of Paris, which

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is neither a more agreeable, nor, it should seem, a more healthy place than London. This will readily appear when we consult the bills of mortality of both cities, and lay those incidents and circumstances together, from the combined examination whereof our judgments are to be formed on subjects of this nature.

In order, however, to avoid any imputation of partiality, it ought to be acknowledged that some eminent physical writers have given it as their opinion, that from our insular situation so far to the northward, we are liable to more frequent colds, and their consequences: and that by impregnating the air with a greater quantity of saline particles, the climate of England is, in these respects, less pure than some parts of the continent.

But leaving the discussion of these matters to those who are best qualified to treat of them, we may proceed to observe that the diversions of Paris are not preferable to those of London. They have their

operas and play-houses, and we have ours; as well as the many other methods of spending, or mispending time, which opulence and ostentation are equally solicitous to invent and encourage in both those capital seats of pleasure, dissipation, and vanity.

They have, however, one species of drama we are yet utter strangers to, and that is what they call the Italian Comedy, though both plays and actors are mostly French. The principal merit of this entirely depends on the person who acts the part of Harlequin. His inexhaustible wit and ingenuity is the great fund that supports all their plays, which are of the burlesque kind, and calculated to excite diversion by dint of buffoonery, and a series of the drollest adventures imaginable.

This theatre, according to general observation, is more crowded than any other. A circumstance natural enough; as all who feel themselves inclinable to laugh heartily (a large corps in France) cannot possibly

possibly provide themselves with a pastime more suitable to their humour.

The wit and ingenuity of the Harlequin on this stage is not merely notional as in our Pantomime entertainments. So far is he from a mute, that what he says is the very life of the cause. He may be fairly termed the *sine qua non*, what passes without him being almost considered as introduced by way of expletive, and but little minded in comparison of what is spoken or done by him. The eyes and attention of the whole audience are in a manner fixed upon him exclusively. The moment he appears, he never fails to set the whole house in a titter.

Attempts at this sort of pleasantry are not uncommon in some parts abroad, especially in Italy (where this kind of genius flourishes the most, and of which country this Parisian Harlequin is a native); but all who have seen them, unanimously acknowledge they never saw so complete a master of the ludicrous as this person.



His ideas flow in a continual vein of mirth and jocoseness, and his talents are such, that from the most trivial incidents he will raise a stock of risible notions, that are alone sufficient to keep the audience alive from the beginning to the end of a play: all which is the more marvellous, as what comes from him is unpremeditated and instantaneous, and animated with a soul of novelty that never stoops to repetition:

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#### C H A P. XLIII.

*On the great Number of Lawyers in France and England—On the Roman Laws and Lawyers.*

**T**HE English make heavy complaints of the excessive multitude of their lawyers: but it is not with more justice than the French. They are, like ourselves, immeasurably overstocked with that class of society, as respectable in its institution and

and in many of its members, as it is contemptible in its perversion, and the number of those who lay themselves out to multiply the modes of chicanery.

As the Normans are supposed to be the most litigious of all the inhabitants of France, it is not improbable their ancestors first brought the spirit of legal altercation into this island. We scarce meet with any traces of it antecedent to the Conquest. Neither the Danes nor the Saxons, our principal forefathers, appear to have been addicted to litigation, nor indeed to have entertained ideas of a regular cultivation of this troublesome branch of business. They not only studied brevity in the promulgation of their laws, but decided their differences in the most summary way they could possibly devise.

Which of the two nations, the English or the French, is most immersed in law-suits is not easy to determine. Both are, it seems, rich enough to employ and maintain armies of lawyers. Our superior li-

berly might induce one to conclude that pleadings at the bar must meet with more encouragement from the boldness of our disposition, and the unrestraint we profess in the manifestation of our thoughts; yet when we reflect, that affairs relative to private property are left wholly to the decision of the law in France, and that the exercise of absolute power is usually restricted to matters of state, we may not unfairly presume that, from the natural warmth and impatience of that people, the gentlemen of the long robe among them may possibly have more business on their hands than even our own, who certainly have enough.

While we are on this subject, it may not be amiss to observe how desirable it were, that the example of a great monarch yet living, might command something more than our bare praise.

The wisdom of his conduct in politics, and his heroic actions in war, however stupendous and worthy of admiration, are  
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yet inferior, in point of real, substantial merit, to that truly royal deed of justice by which he set bounds to the duration of law-suits in his dominions; and crushed, at once, that infernal spirit of discord which had for time immemorial been productive of endless variances among his subjects. An act, of which the utility will extend itself to the remotest generations; while only the memory of his triumphs will endure, and they not improbably be lessened by the pen of partiality, or taxed with injustice by the foes of his country, and of the cause he so invincibly asserted.

Is an imitation of so illustrious a precedent beyond the power of the English constitution to effect? If so, what a constitution is ours? or rather what an infamous representation is made of it, by those whose interest requires that we should not deviate from the absurd and pernicious track we have so long adhered to with the most despicable punctiliousness and servility?



The depravity of mankind, must render an enterprize of this nature an arduous and truly Herculean labour, when we consider what an Augean stable there is to cleanse ; what legions of hungry dependents on the litigious part of the community are to be dismissed from office and pay.

The great Achillean argument against such an attempt, is the pretence of danger to public liberty so repeatedly pleaded ; but this can be demonstrated false, and unsupported by reason and experience. It may be proved on the contrary, that liberty will acquire additional strength by such a measure ; and that the spirit of the procedures now in being is unfavourable to liberty. All this can be shewn by reasonings and proofs so conclusive and cogent, that none but partisans of the present system would reject them ; and so clear and void of intricacy, that they cannot fail being obvious to an unbiassed perception. Nothing remains but prejudice, pusillanimity

fillanimity, and self-interestedness to prevent our entering immediately on the field of action, and calling on the assistance of the well-disposed to lend their hearts and hands in expelling this demon of litigiousness. Exclusive of its disturbing the peace of society, and bringing numberless families to ruin, it ingrosses the faculties and attention of lives that might have been employed in the prosecution of business, or dedicated to liberal studies and improvements; and thereby robs the community of a multitude of useful members.

Let the candid and judicious advert to the innumerable volumes of the Roman laws; the abridgment of which, in the time of Justinian, was itself enormous. That very abridgment, if a compilation of so unwieldy a size may be so intitled, militates for the necessity of the measure we contend for, by evincing beyond dispute how complicate and difficult to unravel all cases had been made, and in what a world of comments and discussions the plainest

plainest transactions must have been involved by the foregoing multiplicity of law tracts.

The surprising quantity of these can be viewed in no other light, than as a proof to what a degree of corruption the practice of the law itself had been carried, during the administration of the preceding emperors. For it was from the establishment of absolute power, we are to date the introduction of that infinite variety of regulations that interfered in the commonest proceedings, and perplexed almost every occurrence in life.

Augustus was far from being an enemy to the law. It was under the protection and shadow of that pretended tenure he governed and disposed of every thing. He was careful, on all occasions, to display a perfect appearance of submission to its decisions. He constantly used the precaution of recurring to its assistance, in order to ratify his decrees; and he applied to it on those emergencies wherein none will  
make



make an appeal to it who does not know himself above the reach of legal authority, and able to influence and controul it at pleasure.

In consequence of these maxims always adopted by dexterous, artful tyrants, in expectation to give the sanction of plausibility to their worst actions, he had the audacious confidence to make the laws instrumental in rescuing from punishment one of his intimates convicted of a crime of which no epithet is able to convey the horror, that of having poisoned more than a hundred persons at a feast.

This same Augustus was so little afraid of multiplying laws, that he procured himself, or rather, indeed, assumed the privilege of proposing and enacting a new law as often as he personally sat in the senate house.

His successors took effectual care to improve so important a privilege, and stretch it to the fullest latitude, by gradually increasing the number to no less than five different



different decrees at one sitting. Such a multiplicity and perpetual increase of laws was of admirable service in extending their authority, through the number of creatures and dependents the execution of them gave birth to.

These were a generation whose very subsistence depended on the tedious forms of administering justice, the arbitrary oppressive delay of which tended equally to establish and confirm both them and their constituents in the most boundless, unreasonable power.

As the utility of such tools was apparent, the necessity of providing for them encouraged edicts that trod in a manner on each other's heels. In the tenour of these, clauses of such a nature were interwoven, as subjected the course of civil affairs to their interposition in almost every case.

Thus the authority of the Roman emperors was founded alike on their legions and their lawyers; and which were the aptest

aptest instruments of tyranny is hard to decide.

The riches of the latter class were such that one of them fairly purchased the empire. Their credit might be compared to that of the Effendis in Turkey, at this day; a body of men whom the Porte knows the use of too well, and consequently respects too much, to give them any molestation.

#### C H A P. XLIV.

*On the Profession of the Law in England, and in other Countries.*

THE law is undoubtedly, in its origin, the fountain and preservation of liberty; yet, according to the well-known proverb, *Corruptio optimi pessima*, "the good when bad become the worst," whenever through the perversion of its practice its members are tainted, they have  
ever

ever proved, in all ages, in all countries, the firmest and staunchest supporters of private and public oppression.

For examples of this an Englishman need not search the records of ancient Rome, nor consult the present state of Turkey. He will find enough at home, in those contemptible classes of low practitioners, so significantly styled *pettifoggers*, and even in the middle stages of the business. Interest and sordid views are manifestly the soul of their profession with most of these. But (what is much more alarming) he will find them among those whom a people is taught to consider as its protectors, and revere as its fathers: those who by their commission should be the principal guardians and assertors of public freedom, and in whose bosoms it were almost a crime to suspect sinister designs could obtain a shadow of admittance. He will find the basest instances of infidelity and treason to this nation to have emanated from that bench where formerly sat  
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the judges of the land. Their prevarication and want of integrity in the day of trial, and their iniquitous decisions in favour of arbitrary power, ought to teach Englishmen to keep a watchful eye on every man whom court-favour exalts to the station which they filled with such disgrace to themselves, and such danger to the liberties of this country.

If we consult the annals of this kingdom previous to the Revolution, there are few of the reigns of our princes that do not afford unfortunate proofs, how readily ministerial smiles can operate on the ambition of great lawyers, and how zealously they can devote themselves to a slavish concurrence with the illegal undertakings of those in power.

Had it not been for the criminal condescendence and adulation in the heads of the law, Charles the First would, in all probability, have pursued very different measures from those that proved so fatal to him. The most inveterate of his enemies



cannot deny that he acted from an unhappy persuasion of their rectitude : a misfortune to which the flattery of his courtiers and interested adherents did not more effectually contribute, than the passive servility of the lawyers in his time. He professed and entertained an unfeigned respect for their judgment; and would, in all likelihood, have shewn a proper deference to it, had they been endued with honesty and courage enough to have dissented from him.

The impartial world seems to agree in this testimony to the memory of that deduced prince, who certainly was a man of unblemished honour and irreproachable conduct in all the moral duties of private life.

We may say partly as much of his son James the Second. He possibly would not have been guilty of those infringements on the rights of his people that caused his ruin, if he had not met with so shameful a subserviency in those members  
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of the law whose eminence in their station intitled and impowered them, to a resistance that might have been salutary to their sovereign, by preventing him from forcing his subjects to have recourse to those expedients, which the extremity he had reduced them to compelled them to adopt in their own defence.

Let us, however, acknowledge, that some of the most illustrious characters that ever appeared have graced and enobled the profession both in England and France. Men whose names ought never to be mentioned without the sincerest veneration, when we consider how much virtue and fortitude they must have exerted in overcoming those temptations, to which, from the conspicuity of their merit and abilities, they were continually exposed.

But, notwithstanding the superior excellence of parts, and the exalted probity of no inconsiderable a proportion of individuals, few of the despotic governments in Europe are apprehensive of encounter-

ing much obstruction from such of their subjects as profess the law. Depending on the court for their advancement to its respective dignities, and holding all their preferments from its approbation and consent, they had rather act in the safer capacity of delegates and supporters of the royal authority, than appear in the dangerous light of friends to the public and enemies to oppression. Pursuant to these maxims they perform without reluctance the injunctions they receive from above: and may, in a great measure, be denominated a component part of the *vis, artes, et instrumenta regni*, the spirit, ways and means by which the system of such a constitution is upheld and conducted.

In all absolute monarchies, lawyers are a body of men highly serviceable to the crown. They not only maintain its prerogatives, and espouse on every occasion, a cause which they are so well feed to defend, but they divert the thoughts of people from public to private transactions, and involve them

them so deeply in their own personal affairs as to leave them no opportunity of meddling with matters of state.

When we consider, therefore, how effectually the minds of so many thousands of subjects are employed in pursuits which take up their attention during many years, often their whole lives; when we reflect, at the same time, that persons thus occupied must, of course, be possessed of more than common resolution, steadiness, and indefatigability, we can no longer doubt that the encouragement of litigation, and the prolonging of law-suits, is one of the methods whereby despotism is strengthened in some countries. They turn into another channel the tide of opposition which might otherwise flow from the stubborn, unyielding disposition of those many champions at law, whose love of broils and contention must have its vent. Had this method been denied them, they would, perhaps, have found another way less peaceable to the community, and more of-



tensive to administration. Men of this stamp are generally endowed with strong patience under disappointments, and unconquerable perseverance in going through what they have once begun; both of them precisely the qualities most wanted in people who are struggling against oppression.

More than one potentate has been careful not to debar his subjects from following their inclinations in such matters; lest, by calling off their attention from particular feuds and altercations to more general grievances, the same hatred and resentment of injustice that sets them at variance with other individuals, might urge them to assert their rights against invaders of a higher class, with the same untameable spirit and activity they persist in against their equals.

It is evident from various considerations, that the multitude of such as belong to the several departments of the law, is dangerous to a country that means either to retain or to recover its freedom.

As their numbers render them powerful, and their vocation inures them to dexterity and acuteness in the management of affairs, they possess a large fund of influence and credit. This, as it is highly beneficial to the public, when their abilities are honestly directed, is, by the same rule, as greatly detrimental to it when they hire themselves for the wages of corruption.

But these wages are offered with no sparing hand, whenever wicked designs are in agitation, and experience teaches they are too often of peculiar efficacy. It is, therefore, incumbent on the patrons of freedom to exert their utmost efforts to diminish that portion of the community from which most danger is apprehended. Members of the law, by their situation, are the most liable to be assaulted with bribes, as they are the most able to insure a return of essential services to their bribers; and the less proof against such an attack from the general spirit of a profession

cession so notoriously at the command of the highest bidder.

This alone were a sufficient motive to be vigilant against the increase of their list, large enough already to outweigh in the scale of due proportion any other necessary class of society : to say nothing of the labyrinth of forms and tediousness of proceedings resulting from the numbers for whom occupation must be found. These render justice an object of terror to all who approach her, and often deter men from applying to her protection, however they may have an indubitable right to do it. They induce them, in short, to look upon her in the same light as little states do on greater, whose assistance they not seldom have cause to repent accepting, from its proving a greater nuisance than the evil it was given to remove.

For these reasons, and many others too numerous to particularise, and of which intelligent people are sufficiently aware, it appears

appears that this branch of business requires a very comprehensive reformation. On the footing it remains at present, in most parts of Europe, it may reasonably be deemed one of the heaviest burdens of the state. An opinion not only founded on the common complaint, but authorised by the sentiments of the most respectable of the profession itself, who, from the remotest periods recorded in history, have been remarkable for their contempt and abhorrence of that meanness and corruption which, even in their time, infected the practice of the law.

We may conclude this subject with observing that laws and lawyers may be compared to soldiers and officers. Both professions are equally necessary for the good government and defence of the state; but then the number of each ought carefully to be limited: whenever it exceeds the bounds of propriety, as the latter never fail to enslave the public, the former always contribute to harass and perplex



it, by disquieting the lives of individuals and fomenting endless jars among them in their private capacity. Hence it may be affirmed, that as the less there is of the military in a civilized country, the more there will be of freedom; the less too there is of law, the more there will be of equity.

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#### C H A P. XLV.

*On the Condition and Character of Servants in France, England, and other Countries.*

A Profession in France particularly deserving our attention, is that of servitude. It is not accompanied with so many circumstances of humiliation as render it irksome and ignominious in some countries, and almost stigmatize those who embrace it as beings of the lowest character in society.

A French

A French servant, either in or out of livery, is commonly a perfect Aristippus. Horace's expressive line on that philosopher is applicable to most Frenchmen whose lot is menial service;

*Omnis Aristippum decuit color, et status, et res.*

"All conditions, employments, and circumstances became Aristippus." This is a descriptive epitome of most of those itinerant Frenchmen, whose supple genius qualifies them for the various tempers and dispositions they meet with in the course of their attendance on foreigners. It no less characterizes those whose propitious destiny allots them the less difficult task of waiting on their own countrymen, who are, in general, the best natured and easiest to please of masters.

The qualities that principally distinguish French servants from those of most other nations, are alertness and aptitude to be useful in a variety of ways: both of them are appendages of the national character of their countrymen, who delight in bustling,

ling, and in acting the part of what we call a Jack of all trades.

Nature seems to have peculiarly formed them for the purposes of domestic service. When persons, whose daily bread is to depend on a particular exertion of activity and aptness in different matters, receive those endowments from the turn and manner of those among whom they are bred, well may they surpass, in general dexterity, others who are born and brought up, where every one applies himself to his own business only. A circumstance, however, attended with material advantages wherever it prevails; in England especially, where, as the reflection naturally arises from the subject, it may be assigned as the chief cause of the superior excellence of the English workmen in their respective branches, comparatively to those in France.

As the lower classes of the French are so completely qualified for domestics, it is not surprising that such numerous colonies

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of French *valets de chambre*, cooks, and footmen, are planted over all Europe; and that the nobility and fashionable people of many countries shew an avowed propensity to prefer them even to their fellow-natives.

A French servant often reminds one of the character of Scrub in the play, from the multiplicity of shapes and forms he assumes. From the kitchen to the garret he will perform every office, and act in every department. One is sometimes amazed at the different jobs he is able to undertake.

Whatever may be their opinion of our national generosity, the French are not inclined to pay their prime homage to Englishmen in the light of masters. They accuse us of an unsupportable haughtiness and violence of temper, and complain that an attendance on most English gentlemen is little better than slavery.

This haughtiness may possibly proceed from a consciousness of independence,  
which,



which, fermenting in the imagination, ingenders a sort of defiance to all mankind that easily degenerates into pride and overbearingness. Perhaps it is the child of wealth, of which, as this country possesses an immense superiority over most others, it has consequently a greater abundance of those whom opulence infatuates and renders supercilious and insolent; or it may possibly be produced by that impatience and impetuosity of mind which lead us to abhor delays and disappointments, and hurry us forward in whatever we attempt. Conformably to this last notion, the French call us *prompts*, "hasty;" and accuse us of being more difficult to manage than the individuals of any other nation. Whatever causes may contribute to this imperiousness of soul, certain it is that foreigners concur in thinking we deserve the imputation.

Whencesoever the mischief may flow, it is intolerable to the French, who, of all people, are charmed with an affable and familiar

familiar treatment, and are least disposed to bear with severity of behaviour: not to forget that the motives of a servant for attaching himself to his master, are thereby reduced to those of mere self-interest, and divested of all affection and gratitude.

This austerity of deportment is much less known abroad, where servants, if they are not so well used in the article of board and wages as in England, are, however, much more complaisantly dealt with in other respects.

In Spain, the grandees, whose propensity for magnificence induces them to keep numerous retinues, are satisfied with a very moderate share of attendance, and are rather proud of displaying their benignity: while the gentlemen of inferior rank look more for obedience and submission than for much labour and fatigue.

In Italy, where parsimony reigns, and where little money, like the talent in the Gospel, is expected to go a great way, the  
finances

finances of a family are too well husbanded to be lavished on menials, whose pittance, therefore, is but small. In return, if a readiness is shewn when they are called upon, together with a respectful compliance with injunctions, it is enough, and they are not overburdened with work of any kind.

In Germany, servitude is on a very humane footing. Masters consider their servants almost as their companions; and behave to them with a good nature and friendliness that obliterate the sense of their condition. This produces frequent instances of great reciprocal attachment. Connections of this nature among them, are very commonly terminated by death alone.

In France, as already observed, the situation of this branch of the community is perfectly happy. The native chearfulness of the people, influences the relation of master and man in a wonderful degree; and often occasions a strain of familiarity

miliarity that gives an ingenious and intelligent fellow endless opportunities of ingratiating himself, and becoming a favourite. Hence it happens that the ruling of a family is not seldom lodged in the consultations held by its head with his aforesaid confident: a thing not uncomplained of in other countries; where the adroitness of French servants in gaining the good graces of their superiors, and placing themselves on a high footing of credit, is often the cause of much envy and heart-burning among their less subtle and enterprising brethren.

On the whole, if foreigners reproach us with too much haughtiness and asperity towards our servants, the English, in their turn, think them too easy and condescending. They highly censure that reciprocally unceremonious behaviour which, from the wide difference of education, and other considerations, they think totally inconsistent and incompatible between a gentleman and his domestic.

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This being, however, another of those cases wherein the justness of proceeding depends so much upon opinion, it were equally arrogant in any of the parties to tax the other with a deviation from that propriety of conduct in this particular; from which they all more or less depart.

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#### C H A P. XLVI.

*On the respective Piety of the French and English.*

**A** Question sometimes agitated is, which of the two Nations, the English or the French, is the most addicted to religion and devotion.

Whichever has a right to challenge the pre-eminence, they are both deservedly noted for as much manly, solid piety as any people whatever. They abound with individuals who, for unaffected purity of morals and strictness of observance in the essential duties of man, are not surpassed

surpassed by those of any other country or persuasion.

If appearances were a proof of reality, neither the English nor the French could pretend to any competition for sanctity and goodness with the natives of some countries. The outside of these argues in their favour much beyond any demonstrations of the like nature in vogue among the former. The truth is, that neither the English nor the French are solicitous to attract notice, and establish a religious character by such means. They imagine, on the contrary, that they only tend to produce and encourage hypocrisy: a vice which, to their honour, is foreign to their disposition, and as little prevalent among individuals in spiritual as in temporal concerns.

Without affecting unnecessary parade, the French display a rational degree of zeal in the external practice of the various injunctions of their belief, and may justly be said to express, by their conduct, a pro-

per sense of respect for the tenets they are taught to profess.

Their churches are duly frequented; and their behaviour there is tempered with a discreet, judicious fervour that favours nothing of the enthusiastic demeanour of some of our fanatics, nor of the grimaces, and ridiculous gestures of the Italians: which last, however, are the most contemptible of the two.

But, notwithstanding, the generality of the French are decent and edifying in that part of their behaviour which relates to religious matters, yet there are exceptions among them, that subject the offenders to the more contempt and ridicule, as they proceed purely from affectation.

This stricture falls principally on the politer classes; and unhappily on such individuals among these as ought, from the exaltedness of their rank, to be very cautious of giving bad examples in public, however dissolutely they may live in private.

Persons

Persons in high life, among the French, are strangely prone to a levity of speech and deportment on such topics and occasions as they are intimately convinced require the very reverse of the part they are acting. It sometimes happens, that when engaged in the most serious and awful of spiritual subjects, they will handle them with a jocoseness, and a liberty, or rather licentiousness of style, highly derogating from their dignity and importance: a foible, or, to call it by a more adequate name, a vice, the more unpardonable, and at the same time the more unaccountable, as they by no means pretend, by such impertinent freedoms, to insinuate their disbelief of those tenets and passages they are actually, though not perhaps intentionally, thus turning to ridicule.

If they are occasionally guilty of such trespasses in their words, they are still more so in their deeds: proofs of this accusation occur especially in their churches, where numbers of them affect to lay aside



all manner of decorum, and converse together almost as freely as at a ball or an assembly.

Such a conduct is the more reprehensible, as it doubtless is liable to have a very detrimental influence on the minds of inferiors, so ready to imitate their betters. The French being notoriously more solicitous than any other people, to tread in the steps of the fashionable world; and, like all others, more susceptible of impressions from bad than from good precedents.

It may not be amiss to observe, that when individuals of the lower classes fall into a track of remissness in these matters, it is of much more dangerous tendency in them than in their superiors. Through want of the advantages of a liberal education, they are not apprised of those numerous motives to moral and religious rectitude, which are continually offering themselves to the recollection of the more enlightened part of mankind. Though a

course of levity and dissipation may, for a while, suspend their influence, they seldom fail to operate, at last, in some measure; and are but rarely of total inefficacy in the breast of those in whom they have been once well fixed by an early and assiduous inculcation.

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C H A P. XLVII.

*On Religious Prejudices in France, and other Parts of Europe.*

**E**XTREMITIES of all kinds, in spiritual matters, seem to be rather exploded in France: Romanism is no longer admitted there in that credulous latitude which yet prevails in Italy, Spain, and Portugal.

The vulgar, indeed, are not divested of many absurd notions, concerning the virtue of certain relics and particular forms

of prayer. But the genteeler sort are not so prepossessed with such absurdities as those of their own level in the aforementioned countries. Persons of the first rank are not there ashamed to wear the most stupid badges of bigotry, and are so weak as to look on some peculiar orisons and modes of worship as more effectual than others. The list of real, or pretended, saints is held in a reverence that exceeds the conception of such as have not been ocular witnesses of their superstition in those respects.

From this infatuation the French are daily recovering. Many an improper object of public veneration has, from time to time, been removed from the eyes of the deluded multitude. What renders it more surprising, this has been done by their own ecclesiastics. The fact is, they are incomparably more moderate and judicious than those of any other Romish country. They are far from being ingrossed, in common, by that spirit of selfishness that makes

makes religion a tool to avaricious views.

And are, upon the whole, a body of men among whom learning and piety flourish with equal lustre.

The reason of the superiority they so manifestly possess, in all instances, over all the other clergy of their communion, is, that they are not only much more learnedly educated, but that, when arrived at maturity of life, much greater liberties are either allowed to or assumed by them of inspecting the books and writings of all sects and parties. What is no less, if not more, essential, they have endless opportunities of conversation and friendly intercourse with the many travellers of various persuasions that abound in France.

From these circumstances, the latter especially, they derive a fund of humanity which not a little dispels that cloud of prejudice, and those gloomy sentiments entertained by their less intelligent brethren, against all who are not within the



pale of their doctrines. A misfortune deplorably notorious in Italy and Spain, particularly the last. Here education is in a wretched state; not so much that part which regards the instructing of youth in classical literature, as that more important portion which is to raise the superstructure on that necessary foundation, by seasoning their riper years with those principles of liberal, manly knowledge, which can only be obtained through a free, unrestrained communication with persons and writers of all countries and denominations.

The want, or rather the denial of this capital requisite to perfect whatever deserves the name of science, is the root of the very worst species of ignorance, that which proceeds from misinformation, and induces men to think themselves infallibly in the right, from the senseless concealment of every argument that might convince them they are in the wrong.

This woeful ignorance, industriously diffused and supported in those bigotted countries

countries by the emissaries of superstition, is the parent of that antipathy for such as profess opposite persuasions, which rages with so much violence in the bosom of the natives. They certainly can have no sort of motive to look on the subjects of the protestant states in Europe with a malevolent eye, save that groundless, criminal hatred, which is ingendered by an unwarrantable prepossession against the parties accused. This, of course, produces a cruel, precipitate condemnation of them, without sufficiently attending to the merits of their cause, and often without deigning to make the least inquiry. To speak truly, people who differ from others in spirituals, seldom attempt an examination of the matter in question, without a previous resolution to find them guilty: a determination the more inexcusable in those who encourage it, as it precludes the very possibility of ever discovering truth. This scandalous disposition predominates in the countries last mentioned, but more flagrantly

flagrantly in Spain, where at this very hour much of that religious fury subsists, which prompts individuals not only to harbour the most horrible ideas of all who differ from them in belief, but even to think themselves intitled to sacrifice them to divine vengeance, as victims, whose destruction is a meritorious deed in those who can effect it.   
 France is now delivered from this dreadful infatuation. The great number of protestants yet remaining in that kingdom, are not viewed by government in any odious light, and seem of late to entertain better hopes than for many years past, from the moderation and discernment of those in power. They have sense enough to perceive, the state has much to expect from their industry and commercial turn, and nothing to fear from their dispositions, which are entirely submissive and peaceable, and not in the least inclinable to renew the pretensions of their forefathers to an equal toleration with the predominant party.

Far,

Far, indeed, are they from presuming on the recovery of such privileges as the successful valour of the French Huguenots purchased in former days with the price of their blood, and secured by solemn treaties. They are perfectly contented with a permission to dwell in peace and safety; and esteem themselves completely happy if their accidental meetings on the score of private worship are connived at, and suffered to take place without any severe notice.

A frequent intercourse with these, and a conviction of their harmless, pacific inclinations, has considerably softened the rigour and diminished the inveteracy of their greatest enemies, the Romish clergy. Many of them live on a friendly footing with noted protestants, in whose families they are received with an hospitality that thinks of nothing but good fellowship, and forgets all difference of persuasion. They behave with a cheerfulness that banishes all diffidence and restraint on  
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account of the disagreeable powers they might exert, were they to assert the authority which the letter of the law has intrusted to their management, to the prejudice of the former.

### C H A P. XLVIII.

*Of the French Monasticks.—On the Jesuits.*

**T**HE conventual orders in France are very numerous and rich. Though inferior to the secular clergy in knowledge and literature, they are very far from being deficient. Since the reformation in their discipline, and the regulations respecting their studies and occupations, introduced among them during the last century, they are beyond comparison the first of all monasticks in christendom.

It were unjust, to pass by, on this occasion, a class of men who, till very lately, flourished in France more than in any state

state of Europe. By the solid utility they were of in the republic of letters, they deserved more respect and protection than any other institution in later ages. Happy had not the spirit of ambition and intrigue interrupted their progress in the laudable pursuits for which their society had been primitively instituted. This pernicious spirit involved some of them in difficulties, from which they not only found it impossible to extricate themselves, but to procure a distinction between the innocent and the guilty. In consequence of that enmity which the whole body had incurred through the arrogant interference of some, with affairs repugnant to the nature of their profession, they were both indiscriminately sentenced to universal ruin.

Whether the grievous accusations laid to their charge are wholly true, or only in part, they were thought more powerful and considerable than was compatible with the safety and interest of those governments that determined their destruction.

tion. Yet this motive may possibly in the opinion of many, not have operated so forcibly against them, as that which more lately prompted the downfall of other religious orders, the view of profiting by the sequestration of their revenues. This some have imagined may, after all, have been the efficient cause of the expulsion of the Jesuits from France, and the other countries whence they were banished. But when we reflect on the severe treatment, some of the chief persons among them experienced in the general calamity that befel their whole body, this seems to put it out of all doubt that the suppression of it must have been owing to other weighty reasons. The known spirit of humanity and moderation now prevailing in the European world is totally inconsistent with the unrelenting and resentful manner in which the persecutions against them were conducted, and the little compassion, or rather satisfaction, expressed by the generality of people at their misfortunes.

C H A P.

## C H A P. XLIX.

*On the Fondness of the French for Pomp and Ostentation.*

**T**HE French delight in airs of importance. However they may carry their native gaiety, or more properly their levity, into the transaction of the most serious affairs, yet they are not willing, at the same time, to suffer the weight and consequence of what they are engaged in to be diminished.

To preserve, by means of external splendor, that dignity which is frequently lost in the inconsistent airiness of their behaviour, they have taken due care to provide an ample admixture of parade, wherever there is any room for its admission. They are equally solicitous to decorate common subjects and transactions with some pompous denomination.

Among other instances, the use made of the word Academy, may serve to convey



vey some idea of the strange perversion of language the French are occasionally guilty of, to serve the purposes of vanity.

Since the various establishments commenced in France by Cardinal Richelieu, the successes of his ministry having conferred the highest lustre on his person and capacity, whatever had been settled and authorised under the sanction of his patronage, became, of course, an object of applause and imitation. Men not only adopted the spirit that prompted the divers institutions he set on foot, but even adhered to a similitude of names in defining such as were framed after his example.

This mode became so prevalent, that it took place not only in undertakings of utility, but found its way into pursuits of too secondary a class to claim such a distinction; and even into some of an immoral tendency.

Ever since the foundation of the French academy, that term is become a favourite one throughout France. Whatever literary

rary or liberal occupation, whatever pastime or diversion was of a social nature, has been complimented with that appellation.

The academies of sciences, and of polite literature had undoubtedly a right to the title; as also that of painting and sculpture. But it has since been debased by an application to meetings of a much inferior stamp; and to others that absolutely disgrace it. Not only riding-houses, fencing-schools, and private musical associations have usurped it, but even societies of professed gamesters, have not been ashamed to make themselves known by this designation.

The French are very ready to accuse the Italians of a ridiculous proneness to bestow emphatical epithets and phrases on the most trifling business, and the slightest occurrences; but certain it is, that a more audacious and barefaced prostitution of any term is not found in the language of

this latter, nor, it is presumed, in that of any other nation.

If the French stretch their arrogance so far on improper and unjustifiable occasions, well may one suppose they will allow themselves the fullest indulgence of vanity on those where a display of stateliness is the less blameable, as attention to appearances is, in some measure, necessary.

On every opportunity of this sort, they study to accompany things with a punctilious show of grandeur; and in default of the substance, to substitute, however, a most pompous shadow.

This is peculiarly obvious in the public conventions of their dignitaries, either in church or state. Such a vein of magnificence runs through the ceremonial exhibited on these occasions as is perfectly calculated to convey a great notion of their importance, and completely to screen their inanity and want of real consequence.

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As these shews, however, dazzle the eyes of the multitude, and procure the persons who figure in them, no inconsiderable share of respect, they have their use in gratifying the ambition of those classes of subjects who, by their rank or employments, are qualified to make a part of them; or, by their birth, have the future enjoyment of them, as one may say, in petto : a prospect which, in a nation so charmed with exteriors as the French, is a sufficient spur to keep their activity on the wing, and to induce them to exert their faculties to the utmost, in order to merit and obtain those imaginary honours in their turn,

This public pomp of persons and of things is no less an elysium to the spectators than to the performers themselves; and is spoken of many a day before its exhibition, with an anticipation of pleasure that proves how great a one is received on the occasion itself.



Happily for the temper and inclinations of the people, these occasions recur very frequently in France. Almost every province has its annual, or at least its triennial, meeting of the clergy and the principal of the laity: not unlike the general assemblies in our colonies; with this difference, however, that in France, they are entirely obedient and submissive to the dictates of the court. It convenes them, and directs their deliberations, with a plenitude of power unknown in our colonies.

Another material difference in these French conventions, is the admission of the clergy (a privilege denied them in our assemblies); and the influence they are so eager to exert on every incident that may contribute to exalt the superiority of their profession, and the character of dignity they are so intent to annex to it in the opinion of mankind.

But that difference which atones with  
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the French for all other deficiencies, is the splendour attending the members who compose these *etats*, "states," as they are styled, and are in reality, if any meeting can be so called where freedom of speech and of debate is utterly denied, and not even dared to be attempted.

But this is a reflection which, one may suppose, they keep at a distance, lest, perhaps, it might prompt them to make dangerous experiments in order to free themselves from so mortifying a situation: or possibly lest too intimate a consciousness of their insignificancy should supercede the feelings of their vanity.

In the mean time, they vie with each other in brilliancy of apparel and equipage, and in sumptuousness of fare. In short, while they continue assembled, nothing is omitted of those concomitances of state and superbness that equally amuse and impose on the croud, seldom attentive to any other tokens of greatness and power, but such as operate on the sight;

and more apt to be pleased with what diverts them, than what is more beneficial, if less entertaining.

The French are, in general, so much taken with this pageantry, as to draw the most ridiculous inferences from the superiority of the parade displayed among them, to that which is made in less ostentatious countries. They seem to imagine that, as in proportion to the figure made by their grandees, the provinces they represent are held in estimation among themselves, by the same rule their nation deserves the pre-eminence over all others; as none accompany the exercise of government with an equal degree of that majesty and *éclat* which are, in their apprehension, the main pillars of sovereignty and command.

Conformably to these notions, all who have a right, or who are commissioned to act on these emergencies, endeavour all they can to make a magnificent appearance; and to verify, as it were, the asser-  
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tion of that Frenchman, who thought proper to apply to them the compliment which the ambassador of Pyrrhus formerly paid to the Roman senate, by comparing it to an assembly of kings.

It may without exaggeration be affirmed, that some of these conventions far eclipse in externals the grandeur of our parliamentary meetings in England; the solid importance and respectableness of which is lost to the mere spectator, and is rather, on the whole, well known than well seen.

Besides these periodical returns of state solemnities, the French have also a continual series of other splendid amusements, in the festivals of their religion.

It abounds in days sacred to the genius of spiritual and ecclesiastical pomp, and furnishes them with frequent opportunities of signalising their ingenuity and skill in such matters; which are often conducted with extraordinary magnificence.



Their religious solemnities are attended with fewer circumstances of absurdity than among their neighbours of the same communion. But whatever superiority of judgment they may boast in the disposition and arrangement of such trifles, suffice it to observe, that their taste in these things differs remarkably from that of the Italians and Spaniards. The first chiefly pride themselves in the exquisite masterliness of execution in the numerous pictures and statues that adorn their churches. The second, in the profusion of riches that glitter on their altar pieces, and are lavished on the utensils fabricated for every part of their worship. While the French seem more peculiarly to delight in the magnificence of the robes and vestments worn by the officiating clergy.

## C H A P. L.

*On the respective Ingenuity of the French and English in  
Arts, Manufactures, and Knowledge.*

**A** Remarkable spirit of carefulness and superintendency has for a long time characterised the genius of the French government. Its watchfulness and solicitude is not confined to administration and police, but extends to whatever may be conducive to public utility; yet, with all the advantages necessarily arising from this unremitting circumspection and attention, they are not arrived at that prodigious variety of inventions and improvements which afford so agreeable, as well as surprising, an entertainment to the foreigners who resort to England.

From the commonest observer to the keenest and most vigilant scrutiniser into things, there seems to be a concurrence  
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in such as are unprepossessed and disinterested, that no other country produces so great a number of expert individuals in the various branches of business they profess; and that the necessary and useful arts are in general no where so well understood and practised as in England.

The impartial and candid among the French themselves acknowledge this without hesitation, and often expatiate upon it in a style that proves how intimately they are convinced of the superiority, in these matters, that England so justly claims over France.

In agriculture, and in rural knowledge of every kind, they are not comparable to the English. The aspect of the land throughout France, proves this beyond dispute. It is a science wherein the inhabitants of this island stand unrivalled.

England has long been styled the garden of the North; but it may now be justly called the garden of Europe.

Neither

Neither is their dexterity in arts and manufactures to be ranked on the same level of perfection to which we find them both carried in England. An avowed preference is given every where to the work of English artificers. Whatever proceeds from their hands, bears a stamp of nicety and neatness to which the handicraftsmen of foreign parts are, in general, utter strangers.

This, however, is a fact better known to, and experienced by, the English who go abroad, than by those who remain at home. Whatever is imported of that nature into this island is prepared with the utmost accuracy, in order to stand the test of the most curious and critical examination. It is wrought, therefore, with a solicitude and exactness that are by no means usual in the common run of their manual performances, which are very coarse and unpolished, in comparison of the productions of our workmen.

In



In England, the implements of the most ordinary and vulgar trades and occupations are, by impartial people, and even by such as would willingly depreciate us, if they could, acknowledged to be finished with a compactness, and almost a delicacy, of workmanship and execution that far surpasses those made in other countries; where, if their tools and instruments are barely fit for use, it is commonly all their makers aim at.

Were we to examine the numerous institutions of all kinds that have been gradually and successively established in France, during the progress of the last and present centuries, with the laudable view to forward and assist the cultivation of arts and manufactures, we shall not find them effecting more, if, perhaps, so much as we have done, on the whole, without such helps.

Painting, sculpture, and engraving they have hitherto excelled us in, from the greater demand for those productions in  
a country

a country where they are encouraged by the spirit of its religion, and diffused, therefore, with a greater latitude than where the gratification of curiosity is their only dependence. In all other respects we fully cope with, and in many we manifestly go beyond them.

Voltaire, in his Letters on the English Nation, compares us to the irregulars of an army, who cannot be expected to perform such expert feats as disciplined troops. This comparison is founded on the want of those ordinances and regulations in our learned societies that keep, as it were, more closely embodied, and consequently in better order, the institutions of that sort in France.

But, with all due deference to his authority, and allowing there may be less of order and regularity in the formation and arrangement of our literary bodies than there is among those of his own countrymen, one may still venture to defy him to cite any greater names among the members

bers who have to this day composed the Academy of Sciences, than have appeared among the fellows of our Royal Society.

With regard to depth of reasoning and enquiry into abstruse and intricate matters, the French do not, in general, equal the English. Few of their writers are as profound as ours, and we much exceed them in the number of excellent compositions on subjects of this nature.

In this department of literature, the English may challenge the supremacy. All Europe allows it. The many celebrated names that could be cited on this occasion, have reflected the highest honour on this nation, and raised it to the summit of reputation throughout the learned world for true wisdom and sound philosophy.

We may dismiss the subject by observing as an illustration of what has been asserted, the best logical treatise in the French language is *l'Art de penser*, "the Art of Thinking;" a work that  
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appeared during the brilliant æra of Lewis the Fourteenth, and was supposed to be the joint production of several of the first geniuses of the time. It is certainly a most valuable performance; but, notwithstanding the universal applause it deservedly received, and the high esteem it justly commands over all France, and wherever it is known, though framed with exquisite judgment and accuracy, it is on the strictest, and most favourable examination, but an elementary treatise, when compared to the Essay on the Human Understanding. Though clear, solid, comprehensive; yet, in the united opinion of the most able and judicious readers, it is not to be mentioned as bearing any adequate proportion to the depth of disquisition displayed in that treasure of equally sublime and useful knowledge, flowing from the masterly pen of our English philosopher.

CHAP.



## CHAP. LI.

*On the French Academy.—Prepossession of the French in  
Favour of their Literati.—On Voltaire.*

**T**HE French academy, founded in order to purify and settle their language, and render it correct by a proper standard of stated rules, has, no doubt, greatly contributed to its politeness and elegance. But, as words and phrases only have been its object, we must not be surprised that things themselves have been rather neglected, and thrown aside, as it were, to make room for the much less necessary task of inventing new modes of expression, and of refining such as were already fraught with sufficient energy.

An undertaking of this nature could not fail to involve those who were employed in it in a multiplicity of superfluous labour, and to turn the edge of their attention to what certainly merited least the efforts of their genius and capacity. These were palpably injured by their assidu-

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ous application at so dull and tedious a business: an assertion which the literary records of that time fully verify.

If we consult the accounts subsisting of many of the most famous members of the French academy, we shall find that their best productions were mostly prior to their reception into that society. Few, if indeed any of the original writings of the primitive academicians are at present in request among their countrymen. On the contrary, if we except the translations made by some of them of not many Greek and Latin, and a few Italian and Spanish writers, little remains of them that is not held in utter contempt. Voltaire himself could not help observing their very names are become an object of derision, and might not improbably be hurtful to authors who should unluckily happen to inherit them.

It certainly seems not unlikely, that a considerable prejudice resulted to those whose faculties were not of a very vigorous

ous and durable texture, from the minute investigation of those endless and almost imperceptible niceties of style and diction that were continually stretching their thoughts on the rack, and absorbing all the powers of their imagination: Such an unceasing fatigue of the spirits not only warped, but incapacitated them from the prosecution of matters of greater moment.

Neither is it surprising that persons immersed in such an inexhaustible fund of discussions should have, in a manner, been obliged to renounce all other occupations: a surmise that does not appear groundless when applied to those who were concerned in the compiling of that immense dictionary published under the name and authority of the French academy.

When we consider the prodigious pains they bestowed in bringing this enterprise to maturity, the infinite trouble they underwent in determining the precise meaning, the propriety, and degree of elegance, or the obsolescence of every term,

all this, it should be confessed, must have required a most laborious and indefatigable scrutiny in each of the compilers. What was incomparably more disagreeable, it must have also occasioned very fatiguing dissertations among the members of the whole society in their collected capacity. They must necessarily have held a prodigious number of sessions before the opinions of so many disputants could be reconciled on the infinity of subjects propounded in their consultations.

Many of these, indeed, were at the commencement of their institution absolutely ridiculous. During a long time, unbounded liberties were publicly taken in exposing to laughter and mockery their affected solicitude about the purity and correctness of the French tongue. Songs, stanzas, and epigrams, filled with jests and scoffings, poured upon them from all quarters. One of the prime wits then in being, wrote a play purposedly to banter them. This was the celebrated *St. Evre-*



mont, whose comedy intitled the Académiciens, very humorously describes the whimsical, absurd spirit that presided in their assemblies. Even of latter days they have been occasionally lampooned. Voltaire himself, among many others, did not, in his beginnings, seem to entertain a high notion of their merit and dignity.

With all this apparatus of care and application, it is by no means clear that the French language has attained to a greater degree of perfection than the English, which has, in a manner, been abandoned to the discretion of all writers indiscriminately. But whatever irregularity and incorrectness may be found in the writings of our authors of avowed, established merit, the spirit and energy of thought and expression for which they are universally renowned, obviate all attention to slight neglects and deficiencies. These are almost inseparable from a truly eminent genius, too intent on essentials to fetter his mind with the consideration of trifles,

trifles, and too deeply engaged in the investigation of things themselves, to pay much regard to that finical accuracy on which the herd of mere verbal critics set so high and so improper a value.

These are the methods by which the men of abilities this nation has produced in such numbers, have recommended themselves to the notice and admiration of the enlightened world ; and have amply atoned for the want of those inferior qualifications the French are so inexorable in requiring from all who assume the character of writers. But these are evidently not viewed in so necessary a light by the literati of other countries. They express an equal, if not a higher degree of approbation for the great classical productions that have done so much honour to the English, of late years, in all parts of Europe, than for those from which the French imagine they ought to derive a superior lustre.

This, no doubt, will appear a bold assertion to a staunch Frenchman : the prin-

cipal lessons of his education have taught him to look on his countrymen as the most conspicuous part of mankind, in the polite and intellectual accomplishments that distinguish the inhabitants of Europe from every other people on earth. In consequence of this opinion, a Frenchman places France as much above the rest of Europe, in these respects, as Europe itself is above the rest of the world.

Such are the ideas, which whoever is acquainted with the French must well know they entertain in favour of themselves. Many of them scruple not to maintain this arrogated superiority with a presumption very offensive to intelligent foreigners ; not only to the English, who being their principal rivals, ought rather to be considered as parties chiefly interested, but equally to the Italians and Germans, who, with reason, esteem themselves as competent judges of merit as the French. Among the most sensible and judicious of these, their excellence has not been rated so high as their vanity ; and the

the English, to their great mortification, have been reputed their equals, at least, in point of science and literature. This equality holds good, even in such compositions, as they will perhaps think it hard they should be denied the first prize in, those of wit and entertainment. As complete specimens of this species of writing have seen the light in England, as in any country; and have justly procured to the English the fame of possessing universal powers of mind, a praise which, though warmly contested by the French, while they dwell on general matters, they are constrained, by the force of truth and argument, to subscribe to, whenever they can be brought to descend to particulars.

An enumeration of these, abundantly sufficient to prove what has been advanced, may be found in a work written, certainly with no design to place the English on a level with the French. The author has given a catalogue of English writers, whom he extols with a warmth of admi-



ration no foreigner of adequate abilities ever exceeded in favour of those French writers that have made the greatest figure in the republic of letters. They, whom rivals praise as much as they are praised themselves, cannot with reason be deemed their inferiors. According to this rule we may conclude that those English authors whom his pen has so amply celebrated, have, in their respective talents, no superiors among the French.

The person that, perhaps without intending it, has paid our countrymen so glorious an homage, is no less a man than Voltaire. In his Letters on this nation, he lays himself out to do it the fullest justice, in most instances. Though in some he coincides with received prejudices, yet, on the whole, he seems delighted with his subject, and, to his honour, most cordially embraces every opportunity of representing us in advantageous colours.

This noble testimony of our equality, at the least, is the more flattering and effectual,

effectual, as it is involuntary, and obtained, as it were, by surprise, from one whose opinion we should probably never have discovered but in this manner.

For this reason it is highly to be prized: nor less, indeed, for the eminent capacity of him from whom it proceeds; a man of whom posterity will think more greatly than envy and detraction will suffer the present age, and to whom, without adulation, may be applied, with respect to his country, the motto from Horace, prefixed to Pope's edition of Shakspeare, "*nil ortum tale*;" "France never produced his equal:" an assertion grounded on that amazing variety of excellent productions which have been continually flowing from his inexhaustible genius, during the space of more than half a century: a portion of time wherein he has indisputably reigned the most eloquent historian, the sublimest poet, in short, the most celebrated writer in all Europe.

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This return of praise and respect we owe to the name of a person, who has so much contributed by the weight annexed to the splendor of his talents, to diffuse the reputation of England through the many countries where his writings are so highly and deservedly esteemed. He is sometimes more severe upon us than is consistent with exact veracity, yet, considering that he is a Frenchman, and therefore interested against a people, for ages the professed rivals, and, still more, the inveterate foes of his country, it ought rather to be admired that he could suppress the emotions of native partiality so far as to lavish, on some occasions, the whole powers of his eloquence in our favour, than afford any disgust that he should yield, which he does but seldom, to the torrent of prepossessions so strong and prevalent in his country to our disadvantage.

CHAP.

## C H A P. LII.

*On the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.*

NEXT to the academy that has given rise to this digression, in point of date, but far superior in merit and utility, is the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Lettres.

Whatever encomiums they bestow upon this institution, it will suffer no disparagement if we class it with our Society of Antiquaries: among whom there is probably as copious a repository of classical and medallic learning as among the gentlemen who compose the former.

The term medallic is used because this French society was primarily designed, as their appellation intimates, to cultivate that sort of knowledge which is conversant in ancient coins and medals, and what may be properly called the study and science of antiques.

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An additional motive, as it was pretended, though very probably the principal and most efficient of any that contributed to this establishment, was to record the most signal and remarkable events and transactions of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth, its founder and patron.

This task, it may truly be said, they performed in a strain of flattery that stigmatises them for the completest masters of adulation that were ever incorporated, to varnish and disguise weakness, folly, and oppression.

There was not a single deed of their infatuated sovereign deserving any of these appellations (and the world knows there were many), which they did not extol as the summit of fortitude, wisdom, and clemency. They audaciously employed every symbol appropriated to the signification of what is praise-worthy and heroic, to perpetuate the memory of deeds which none but his foes should be glad to see thus infamously rescued from oblivion.

Under

Under the Roman Emperors medals were often struck; of those which remain, most were well adapted to the occasion. Doubtless there were several sacred to the virtues and heroism of such as were neither virtuous nor heroes: but we do not read of the most tyrannical and depraved of them ever avowedly forming a corps of professed sycophants, in order to blazon and embellish, in so fulsome and scandalous a manner, facts unworthy of notice, or deserving of none that could redound to their honour.

Such an affront to the discernment of mankind was reserved for that spirit of arrogance, which dictated the measures adopted under the auspices of Lewis the Fourteenth. Notwithstanding the pompous encomiums so profusely lavished on his undertakings (if truth, divested of palliation, is appealed to), he was the scourge of that age to which partiality and prejudice have affixed his name by way of honour and distinction.

In

In the judgment of men of solid sense and penetration, France hardly ever experienced a more unfortunate period. A strife seemed to have arisen between the monarch and his subjects how far he could extend his ill usage of them, and exert a despotism unknown to the most arbitrary of his predecessors; and how far they could carry their flattery and applause of him, for such things as, in any king but their own, they would have beheld with detestation or contempt.

Hence, in the midst of as impolitic and severe administration as ever disgraced a crowned head, he was magnified as a consummate politician, and a benign sovereign. What was a far greater evil, it precluded all attempts to a cure. Such was the reciprocal infatuation both of prince and people, that he not only thought himself, but was esteemed by those who surrounded him, entirely deserving of those epithets.

CHAP.

## C H A P. LIII.

*On the Sorbonne—French Prejudices in Matters of Learning and Literature—Their Latinity.*

**A**NOTHER pillar of the glory of France is the Sorbonne. The ecclesiastical part of the French nation esteem it as much superior to any school in Europe, for theological erudition, as they assert the religion it was founded to teach and maintain is above what they denominate the heretical sects that have disturbed the peace of Christendom in all ages.

Since the days of Cardinal Richlieu, the great benefactor and restorer of this celebrated seminary, it has flourished with greater lustre than ever; and produced personages of prime eminence in the study of divinity: none, however, to be preferred to such as the universities of England can boast. These may, in spiritual matters, as much be considered the bulwark



bulwark of protestantism, as England itself, in temporal affairs, is justly reputed the main support of the liberties of Europe.

Whatever the French may think of their divines, the writings of the English on those points where both parties are agreed, find, it is presumed, a greater number of readers in France than theirs of a similar kind do in England. Among these readers, may be counted some of the most learned professors in their universities; the Sorbonne itself not excepted. This approbation and esteem of our theological performances, we are far from paying to theirs; notwithstanding the known readiness and impartiality with which we read and admire the productions of the French. This, though an indirect, is perhaps no inconclusive proof of the superiority of the English divines.

But whatever arguments may be urged against the pretensions of the French, there is no branch of knowledge wherein  
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the pride of the generality can imagine they have competitors, much less superiors.

The truth is, ever since the reign of that monarch, of whom so much has already been said, the spirit of domineering, that marked his character, communicated itself, in no small measure, to his subjects. They were, long before his time, tinctured with a sufficient share of national conceit; but they derived from the splendor and successes that accompanied a considerable part of his reign, an additional degree of arrogance, which exalted them, in their own imagination, as much above every other people, as his power and grandeur exceeded those of any cotemporary potentate.

Notwithstanding the decrease of the strength and importance of France, the natives have lost nothing of that ideal greatness, which is so difficult to eradicate from the minds of a people who have once made a capital figure in the world.

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They still continue to esteem themselves, as much as they did then, incomparably the first nation in the universe.

Were they content with challenging a right to an equality, no umbrage could reasonably be taken: but that would be a degradation to which it must not be expected the French will ever submit. Some there are who think as respectfully of their neighbours as of themselves; but the generality are no less amazingly than ridiculously prepossessed with the most stubborn conviction of their universal superiority in all things. This is a foible not only common among the less enlightened classes, but as much, if not even more, prevalent among the major part of their literati. They cannot patiently suffer a comparison of their fame and merit with those of foreigners. They often remind one of Virgil's simile of Rome lifting its head as much above other cities,

*Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi,*  
 "as a tall cypress above a slender shrub."

This

This seems the degree of magnitude they ascribe to their nation relatively to others. Good breeding restrains the direct manifestation of their sentiments on this point; when engaged in conversation with strangers, yet one may, without much depth of penetration, and in spite of the caution they use to soften what they say to the depression and undervaluing of others, plainly discover the prodigious height from whence they look down upon all other individuals in this particular.

This vanity and presumption are the more surprising, as a very little enquiry would shew them how much they proceed from the grossest ignorance. The least attention to what passes in our island, for instance, must quickly teach them, that however prosperously they cultivate the field of learning and literature, it is not with a success beyond our own. Their universities, though far more numerous and fuller of students, do not afford an ampler catalogue of illustrious names;



and, notwithstanding the French nation is doubly, at least, as populous as the English, yet, on examination, we shall find, in our own, a parity of excellent authors in all branches of science or genius.

Addison, it is said, was the first who gave the celebrated Boileau an advantageous notion of our literary abilities. If this be true, Boileau, and the rest of his countrymen, who stood, it seems, much in the same predicament, were most shamefully ignorant what a treasure of intellectual merit was to be found in England. An ignorance of this kind certainly reflected no inconsiderable disgrace on the French. As a learned and polite nation, they ought not to have remained so long unacquainted with the worth and eminence of neighbours, of whose turn, capacity, and progress in all improvements, it behoves them principally to have the most early and accurate intelligence.

In this respect we are confessedly much  
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more inquisitive and better instructed than they are ; a circumstance that has essentially contributed to the figure this nation has long maintained. It is a medium never to be neglected by a people, whom the spirit of freedom enables to adopt all such as may prove beneficial to its interest, or conducive to its honour. Of the many restrictions imposed by despotism, it is not the least, that men should be debarred from that unlimited inspection into the fund of knowledge and talents possessed by others, which is the greatest channel whereby to communicate and diffuse science, good sense, and happiness, throughout the world.

Inspired by this auspicious and praiseworthy curiosity, we had fully perused, and were thoroughly conversant with, the merit of the French in these particulars, long before they had any tolerable idea of our's ; though, strange to tell ! this unpardonable neglect subsisted in France during the whole reign of Charles the Se-

cond (and even till the commencement of this century,) an æra as remarkable for the flourishing state of learning and literature in England as any that preceded or followed.

Among other articles of imaginary superiority, the French pride themselves unconscionably in the skill and expertness of their scholars in writing Latin. As they set a prodigious value on compositions in that language, public prizes have been instituted in the university of Paris, and several others, for the encouragement of proficient.

But it may, without partiality, be confidently asserted, that they have not yet produced any thing of higher classical merit than the many ingenious pieces that appear at Oxford and Cambridge, at those periodical terms appointed for a regular proof and exhibition of their progress in the learned languages.

As it would be tedious, and rather uninteresting, to descend into a detail, it will  
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be sufficient to appeal for the veracity of what has been advanced to the candour and impartiality of those who have had the curiosity to examine the several productions on either side.

It may not, however, be amiss to add, that, with regard to the younger classes of students, a far greater proportion of assistance is afforded to the French than to the English universitarians in their respective trials of skill. Of the former it may be said, that more than half their work is done for them before they set about it. Not only the outlines, and general heads of the subject are copiously laid down, but even the thoughts, and sometimes many of the principal words, are prepared. The chief business consists in properly arranging them. Hence it may be justly inferred, that those performances are strictly no less than specimens of the capacity of the ablest persons in their universities.

The case is much otherwise in our's ; where a simple delineation of the subject



is the only thing propounded, and the amplification is wholly left to the efforts of those of whom it is intended to ascertain the abilities.

In attempts of a superior nature, the French have not yet displayed a higher degree of excellence in Latinity than the English, either in prose or in poetry. Though the former affect a more frequent use of that language than the latter, yet the perhaps less numerous pieces that proceed occasionally from the pens of these, are, in the opinion of competent judges, not inferior in correctness and elegance. It is difficult to decide on the merit of modern compositions, in a language doomed to obsolescence so many centuries ago. No few connoisseurs, however, esteem the English literati more critically conversant in it than those of any other country, at this day.

Notwithstanding the encomiums deservedly bestowed on the illustrious Thuanus, his style, however pure and classical,

is not superior to the Latinity of Erasmus among the Dutch, of Buchanan among the Scots, nor, allowing for the dryness of his subject, to the language of that elegant physical writer, Doctor Freind, among the English.

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#### C H A P. LIV.

*On the Propensity of the French and English to overrate their Merit.—Character of the Romans in this Respect.—Of the Persians.—And Tartars in China.*

**E**XCLUSIVE of the motives that have been mentioned, for preferring themselves to other nations, the French have a variety of others. They are indefatigable in seeking and finding out reasons to nourish that persuasion of supremacy over the rest of mankind, wherein they delight to indulge themselves much more than any other people.

All nations are, it must be confessed, sufficiently

Sciently warm and zealous in contending for a greater proportion of merit and praise than strictly belongs to them : but still most of them preserve some appearance of modesty in the enumeration of their virtues, and abstain from those immoderate assertions of priority, that only serve to render them odious without establishing any conviction of the rectitude of their pretensions in the minds of those whom they labour to represent as inferior to them.

The English are, perhaps, the only people at present whose propensity to exalt themselves above others, falls but little short of that of the French ; but even they are not so universal in their claims to unrivalled excellence, being willing enough to allow their neighbours to surpass them in many respects.

Neither should it be omitted, that the English are above dissembling the high opinion they entertain of themselves. They aver their sentiments with candour and

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downrightness, while the French, with a pretended solicitude that renders them peculiarly ridiculous, often affect to conceal that deep-rooted belief of their unlimited super-eminence, which is, nevertheless, perpetually betraying itself in their words and actions.

It is observable that the Romans, unquestionably as proud and haughty a people as ever existed, were, notwithstanding, remarkably impartial in the appreciation of their worth. In the midst of their triumphs, they never assumed to themselves more merit than they had the clearest right to challenge.

Hence we find no vain-boasting in any of their writings. In the many speeches their historians or poets have either collected from tradition, or, in the heat and fire of composition, have put into the mouth of their heroes, we see no other pride and exultation than that which resulted from the successes that were due to their valour and conduct, the two only qualifications



fications wherein they adjudged themselves the prize.

Instead of industriously striving to under-rate the worth of other nations, the Romans seem not to have felt the least disquietude in allowing them all the great and good qualities they thought themselves intitled to. They had too much honour and magnanimity, after depriving them of their liberty, to rob them also of that consolation a people enjoy in the consciousness of being superior to, and respected by, their conquerors, for those arts of which the cultivation is more interesting and honourable to mankind than the pernicious science of conquest and destruction.

Such were the sentiments of that victorious people. They did not deviate from them even after they had arrived at the summit of politeness and civilization ; as may be gathered from those passages in their writers, wherein they draw a parallel between themselves and the many nations they had subdued.

Horace

Horace is far from magnifying his countrymen beyond their deserts. At a time when Rome was become the seat of literature as well as of universal power; when all kind of improvements flourished with distinguished lustre in that capital of the universe, he is conspicuously decisive in favour of the superiority of the Greeks in those literary accomplishments whereon the Romans highly valued themselves, and which they were so studious to acquire. Witness the elegant acknowledgment he so frankly makes in that well known line,

*Vos exemplaria Græcæ,  
Nocturna versate manu, versate diurna.*

He expressly enjoins his countrymen to revere the transcendant genius of Greece; and to look on its productions as the best models to admire and imitate.

Virgil is no less explicit in those celebrated verses wherein he describes, with such precision and majesty, the different attributes of the Greeks and Romans.

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To the latter he allots no more than the arts of war and government, while on the former he lavishes, with equal truth and energy, the praise they so amply deserve for having carried every polite art to the utmost stretch of human perfection; *excudent alii spirantia mollius æra, &c.*

Cicero himself, notwithstanding that personal vanity which was the unhappy foible of his otherwise illustrious character, still adheres to the most exact and laudable impartiality in his review of the various people he sets in the balance of comparison with the Romans. "Whatever we may think of ourselves, says he, we have no right to imagine ourselves superior to the Gauls in bodily endowments, to the Carthaginians in acuteness and policy, nor to the Greeks in arts and sciences." *Nec robore Gallos, nec calliditate Pænos, nec artibus Græcos superavimus.*

In this truly respectable virtue of national modesty, the Romans were never exceeded by any people. It may be added, they were probably not a little indebted to

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it for the peaceable submission to their yoke of the numerous countries they had conquered. The inhabitants bore the weight of subjection with the less reluctance, as their native character was not oppressed, and forced to give way to that of their masters, by adopting their notions and manners; neither of these the Romans took pains to introduce any where. They left men entirely at freedom to act in these particulars as they thought proper. Fully satisfied with their obedience in matters of government, they sought no other superiority. They were too wise to lay themselves out to inculcate a persuasion of their being the most perfect and complete people in all respects; a persuasion which, if founded on truth, they well knew would gain ground of itself; and which, if unsupported by reality, no artifice could establish.

It is probable they were apprehensive that an attempt of this nature on their part, far from promoting, might prove

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an obstruction, and frustrate the design, from the envy and jealousy naturally concomitant on such an endeavour.

From motives of terror people might, indeed, be brought to dissemble their aversion, and quietly yield to their arms; but they were well aware that no arguments would suffice to divest men of their feelings, and render them sensible of imaginary, pretended merits, founded merely upon arrogance. A conquest over the human mind is beyond the power of violence to effect. They who are the most ready to refrain from resistance to external force, often shew themselves the least willing to acquiesce in pretensions to any other kind of superiority, even in those who become their most arbitrary and incontrollable masters.

Besides the Romans, antiquity furnishes us with a no less meritorious instance of self-denial and impartiality in the character historians unanimously ascribe to the Persians. Though as ambitious a  
people

people as the former, and, in their days no less formidable in the Asiatic world, than the Romans were in after-ages, they still retained a moderation and a condescendence to the humours and tempers of the nations over which they extended their dominions, that made it much more supportable than that of any other conquerors we read of in history.

The Persians were noted for a spirit of benignity and indulgence. A perfect equality subsisted between them and the nations they had reduced, throughout the whole extent of their vast empire. They arrogated no distinguishing marks of pre-eminence, nor let the vanquished see or feel they were the ruling people. In the system of their government all who had submitted to it were alike thought worthy and capable of enjoying an adequate portion of it with themselves. No partial predilection was maintained in their own favour. Instead of regarding the natives of the countries their arms had overcome

as a race of men inferior to their conquerors, they employed them indiscriminately with their own people. They were even solicitous in seeking, with the utmost industry, for persons of talents and abilities among them, in order to raise them to the posts of honour and trust.

This noble confidence was often carried so far, that many of the countries they added to their empire hardly perceived they were subject to the Persians by any other token than that of acknowledging them their chiefs and protectors. Whatever had been the form of their government, it remained usually unaltered. Commonwealths still retained their own laws and regulations; and kingdoms did not even experience a change in the reigning families. So long as these acted with fidelity to their new masters, they were left in a friendly possession of their inheritance.

The Greeks themselves, their capital and invincible enemies, were not excluded  
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from the most munificent exertion of their generosity. Though perpetually at war with them, either by open and direct hostilities, or by fomenting the divisions that were continually disturbing the internal peace of that distracted people, the Persians had still impartiality enough to recognize their superior merit, and to reward it in the most distinguished manner, whenever conducive to their utility.

The recompence they derived from this liberality of conduct, fully demonstrated how consistent it was with the soundest policy. None of the many nations of which they acted, in fact, rather as heads than masters, considered them in any other light than as the principals of a grand confederacy, formed under their direction, and supported by their power. They beheld them with an eye of respect and deference much more than of awe and terror.

Tacitus observes of a Roman governor in Britain, *Caritatem loco autoritatis para-*



*verat*, " that he was obeyed through affection more than through fear." With equal truth it might be said of the Persians, that by conducting themselves with that equanimity of mind and decency of behaviour, which deprives no individuals of the importance they are conscious of deserving, and consequently expect; and by rewarding superior capacity wherever discovered, they attained to the summit of the most valuable of all political arts, that of commanding the persons of men through an influence over their minds.

By such laudable means the Persians established an empire, the basis of which was equality and justice in the distribution of recompence and honours, and an abhorrence of undue preferences. It was consequently framed to fear no dissolution from any cause arising within itself, and could only be destroyed by those violent concussions which seem to be periodical in the universe, and to act with irresistible  
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might when the time decreed for their operations is arrived.

Thus it required no less than an Alexander, at the head of the bravest and most invincible nation then existing, to overturn the Persian empire. One may observe on this occasion, that his rapid and astonishing success was in a great measure owing to the radical defect of all governments established by too diffusive conquests, the vast distance of the seat of power from the parts exposed to the attacks of the enemy. This, among other causes, concurred materially, many centuries after, to the downfall of Rome.

The triumphs of Alexander are to be attributed to the superior skill in war of the Greeks, and no ways to inferiority of courage in the Persians. This appears from the intrepidity they displayed, to the last, in every battle they fought with that hero. In other respects they had the advantage. Their finances were in better order; their armies, though more nume-

rous, were much more abundantly supplied with necessaries ; none of their subjects swerved from their fidelity ; none of their allies deserted them ; and even the Greeks that were in their pay did not lay down their arms till after the death of Darius.

Such instances of unfeigned attachment, and of perseverance in their interest until all was lost, do them more honour, as they are incontestible proofs of their lenity in the exercise of power, than even the victories of Alexander conferred on his military talents. No very extraordinary exertion of these was requisite in the contest with a people who, unhappily for them, had not cultivated the art of war with an assiduity sufficient to enable them to cope with a nation like that of the Macedonians. These made that science their only study : having, by their expertness in it, subjugated even the Greeks themselves, they could not find much difficulty in overpowering the Persians, nor derive, therefore, much glory from having succeeded

ceeded in an enterprize that was far from being so arduous as some have imagined. It was attended with little more hazard and danger than the conquest of Mexico by the Spaniards in latter times.

In modern ages, this national magnanimity in ascribing to others their fullest due, has on no occasion appeared with greater lustre than in the celebrated revolution which, about the middle of the last century, transferred the empire of China to the Tartars, who inhabited the wide regions situated to the north of that famous country. Similar events in most other parts have, in a manner, changed the face of things, and the world owes to them, in general, the stupendous alterations that have successively taken place in so many kingdoms and states. But in China this revolution proved no more than a change of one family for another. The notions, manners, and minutest customs of that country were still preserved. The conquerors had sense enough to perceive



the immense superiority of their new subjects to themselves, in all that was truly essential and praise-worthy; they quickly forgot the haughtiness so natural to those whose right of governing is founded on the sword alone, and adopted the spirit and institutions of that illustrious people with a willingness and promptitude that reflected more credit on their judgment and perception, [than the reduction of the Chinese had procured reputation and glory to their valour.

Hence, in a short time, both the rulers and the ruled were mixed and incorporated together in such a manner as entirely obliterated the very remembrance that any differences or disparity had ever subsisted between them. They became so intimately blended as to resolve themselves, imperceptibly, into one single nation, and to compose the most extraordinary union that has ever been recorded in the annals of mankind.

It

It has, indeed, been suggested that there is little or no room either to wonder at, or applaud, the sagacity of the Tartars, in exchanging their own savage customs for those of so civilized and intelligent a people as the nation they had subdued. But they who argue in this manner, forget that the northern nations that over-ran the south of Europe, were very far from imitating the Tartars, in this particular, and for a great length of time still continued barbarous and uncivilized.

From this recapitulation of facts, it appears how much they deviate from their true interest, whose avidity of ingrossing every object of human pride, induces them to monopolize all pretensions to supremacy of merit; and how much more wise they are, whose ambition knows where to stop, and how to deal out with an impartial hand that measure of applause which is due to the respective exertions of genius, without endeavouring to annihilate every kind of worth that has not fallen to  
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their own lot, or to depreciate talents wherein they themselves do not conspicuously excel.

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## CHAP. LV.

*On the arrogant Ideas and Conduct of the French and Spaniards in Regard to other Nations.*

**V**ERY different from the salutary maxims and practices adopted and pursued by the nations afore-mentioned, have those of the French been at all times and places, and even in all circumstances.

Far from shewing a willingness to set other nations on a general parity with their own, much less to acknowledge that these have produced individuals of superior merit, it is with reluctance they condescend to admit their pretensions of equality in any respects. Their allowance even of these pretensions is limited to things of a secondary worth. In the  
scale

scale of comparison between themselves and the rest of the world, they are highly averse to place any of those great qualities that conduce to exalt the character of nations.

Amidst the discussions they delight in concerning their neighbours, it is observable that the French chiefly touch on their outside and manners. These they firmly believe they have a right to turn to ridicule, or at least to represent them as faulty.

It is not surprising they should find ample room for criticism and censure in others, when the only standard by which they judge them is the system of propriety they have thought proper to frame for their own observance.

Pursuant to this rule the French proceed to examine and pass their judgment, upon us and every other nation, with an arrogance and presumption the more inexcusable, as they have the assurance to cover them with the mask of equity, by  
adhering



adhering scrupulously to the regulations and precepts according to which the trial is to be conducted. This, as Mr. Pope remarks of the inexorable criticoisers and condemners of Shakspeare, is trying a man of one country by the laws of another, which he is not bound to observe.

Such are the methods used by the French to maintain their pretended superiority over other nations. But instead of effecting that purpose, they only serve to subject them to a counter-examination, which never fails to terminate as unfavourably for them.

It is in vain they allege the imitation of their modes and the use of their language as proofs of the world's great opinion of them. The first is no argument of deference, but may be accounted one of the transitory tastes of mankind, who, without attending to the intrinsic merit of any fashion, take it up merely as such without any other reason, and leave it off just in the same manner.

The second, indeed, is rather more plausible, but still cannot be received as a token of superlative esteem. When the language of a people becomes more general than that of any other, we are to seek for the cause not so much in its genuine excellence, as in the many other considerations that influence the transactions of men.

When a great nation exerts itself in a conspicuous manner, and extends its power and importance by conquests and establishments of various kinds it is natural the world should take notice of it, and it no less necessarily follows that, from the motives of general correspondence, the use of its language should increase in proportion to its acquisitions and the multiplicity of affairs it is of course engaged in.

Thus the Latin tongue became, in a manner, the universal language of mankind in the time of the Romans. Thus the Spanish, during the triumphant æra of

of that monarchy was as fashionable as the French is at present.

But it should not thence be inferred that either the French or the Spanish nations were held in a light of veneration by their neighbours, since, on the contrary, their politics exposed them justly to detestation on all sides. Nothing but the absolute need of common intercourse could have forced men to speak the language of a people, whose restless ambition impelled them to a boundless interference in all affairs, and to seek for every occasion of creating and perpetuating troubles and disturbances among their neighbours.

Hence it appears that this so often repeated motive to engage the preference and approbation of the public, in favour of the French language, its general diffusion, is wholly of a contrary tendency to what they would represent it. It rather reminds us of the iniquitous origin of that diffusion, than convinces of the propriety of allowing it the vogue and encouragement

agement it still meets with in so many parts of Europe.

Both the French and the Spaniards seem to have been equally guilty of that impolitic vice, of undervalueing and insulting their neighbours, those chiefly over whom they had established their dominion; and of taking an avowed pleasure in shewing them how low they stood in their estimation.

During their possession of the sovereignty of the Low Countries, this absurdity was visibly impressed on the whole conduct and behaviour of the Spaniards. They were so fully satisfied of their own pre-eminence in all qualifications, that they could hardly be persuaded, by the clearest calls of immediate interest, to trust the management of any business of importance to the natives. They considered them as unfit to be ranked with themselves in point of capacity, and thought it enough to leave them a participation in the executive department of government without suffering



suffering them to enjoy any essential weight in those deliberations whereon the springs of action were depending.

The consequences of this treatment of the natives were such as they cannot fail to prove in all countries. Fired with resentment and indignation, their whole study was to traverse and impede every scheme and measure adopted by the Spaniards. They viewed them in no other light than of contemners and oppressors of a people whom they deemed helpless and unable to resist their oppression. The moment an opportunity offered of throwing off the yoke, they embraced it with a warmth and eagerness that convinced their tyrants they had been even more hated than feared. It taught them, at the same time, a lesson never to be forgotten by those nations who wish to conciliate the affections of others who are subordinate to them, that nothing loosens the bands of obedience so effectually, as to affront the understanding of mankind, by letting them

them see that we think them unworthy to be trusted with the administration of their own concerns.

By a similitude of conduct in that unfortunate kingdom they had acquired by the most bare-faced usurpation, they rendered themselves no less obnoxious to the execration of the natives. These waited with impatience for an occasion to expel them from a country where, had they demeaned themselves with tolerable prudence and moderation, they might easily have preserved a lasting footing. The Portuguese were far from cherishing an aversion to the Spaniards till these had given birth to it by their haughtiness and partiality. They manifested by their daily proceedings, an insuperable contempt of them, and a settled resolution to refrain from no acts of violence, however flagrant, in order to keep them in the most ignominious subjection; depriving them of every remnant of authority, and treating them as if they had been determined

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to shew they considered them as unqualified to claim the direction of public affairs.

The behaviour of the French has not been attended with more wisdom and equity than that of the Spaniards, in most instances of the same nature. Wherever their power has been felt, their expulsion was never regretted. They always left behind them the remembrance of a people, infinitely more amiable on the footing of equals, and taken individually, than in the collective national situation of masters.

If we carry our retrospection to those unenlightened ages that saw the folly of the Crusades predominant over all the Christian world, we shall find that none of those military pilgrimages were attended with more mischiefs than those wherein the French acted a principal part.

To say nothing of the shameless, contemptuous treatment of those countries through which these lawless multitudes pursued

pursued their journey, let us advert to those nations and states, where they were occasionally obliged to sojourn, and fix, as it were, their head-quarters for a while. Certain it is that such of the natives as have transmitted to posterity accounts of the behaviour and proceedings of the French, may well be supposed not to have been guiltless of exaggeration: but without appealing to them alone, there are other historical monuments that bear ample testimony to the truth of the many complaints against the pride and presumption of the French. One of their own most illustrious writers declares positively against them, and acknowledges, with a noble ingenuousness, *Que les François qui avoient part à ses expéditions n'avoient rien fait pour se faire souffrir*, "that the French who bore a share in those expeditions had done nothing to recommend themselves."

The truth was, that the whole tenour of their words and actions had rendered them insupportable. Their insolence knew



no bounds. As their strength and numbers enabled them to insult people with impunity, they carried their audaciousness to such lengths, that even they to whose assistance they were sent, lost all patience, and became their most dangerous enemies. From the secrecy of an hatred which they did not dare to avow, they employed all those subtleties and artifices which a false friendship is so fertile in suggesting, against those to whose prejudice we have not courage enough to act otherwise than underhand.

This deportment of the French proved materially ruinous to the common cause they were engaged in. Not only they, but the other confederates felt the resentment of a people the French had laboured to revile in the grossest manner. They had been particularly guilty of that kind of abuse, which, though it may not detriment the persons, yet hurts in the most virulent, outrageous manner, the minds of men, and leaves those traces in the soul  
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that are never effaced, and are always kindling it up to vengeance on the least prospect of carrying it into execution.

This arrogance of disposition was no less flagrantly demonstrated in after-times, in the numerous expeditions of the French into Italy, and may, in a great measure, be assigned as the leading cause of the ill success they met with in that country.

The like strain of impertinence accompanies them in an equal degree to this day. Their afore-mentioned countryman, the great Montesquieu, confesses it, without endeavouring at any palliation either with regard to the past or the present times.

His words are clear and decisive, *chez une nation etrangere nous ne nous contraignons point, & nous avions autrefois les defauts qu'on nous reproche aujourd'hui*. "We do not, among strangers, behave with moderation and decency, and we had formerly the same defects that foreigners now reproach us with."

Conformably to this imputation, no-

thing is more usual than to hear a Frenchman, in the impetuosity of his discourse, depreciating the manners and customs of a country where he is, as it were, on mere sufferance, and depends on the natives for countenance and support. A Frenchman, when entered on this topic, absolutely forgets all temper and discretion, and seems to think it an entertainment to his audience to hear him expatiate upon matters, which, on the smallest recollection, he must be conscious are extremely disgusting to them.

An Englishman, though fully prepossessed in favour of the ways and the habits of his countrymen, still, when abroad, conforms without murmuring or reluctance to what is customary and usual. He has too much modesty and deference for the persons he converses with, to condemn their practices for differing from those in England: whence foreigners concur in an opinion of long standing, that the English are much more acceptable out of  
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their country than the French are out of theirs.

From a preference of manners, the transition is easy to a preference of parts. We are not to wonder if, elated with their imagined superiority in the former, the French should challenge the same degree of excellence in the latter.

But as in the career of vain glory it is difficult to bridle fancy, the presumption that urges the French to represent themselves above the rest of mankind, induces numbers of them to assume such airs among foreigners, as not seldom lay them open to the severest mortifications.

This unhappy defect is chiefly notorious among such of their grandees as act abroad in a public character: many have drawn themselves thereby into difficulties; and instead of procuring any respect for the office they were invested with, have rendered themselves odious, and highly detrimental to the business committed to their management.



Among other instances of this unseasonable display of haughtiness, the French ought never to forget that memorable one of the Duke of Villeroi, Ambassador to the celebrated Victor Amadeus, then Duke of Savoy, and afterwards King of Sardinia. His high spirit was so exasperated, and took such offence at the provoking freedoms of this French nobleman, that to them may, without hesitation, be greatly ascribed the resolution of this prince to abandon the cause of Lewis the Fourteenth, and to join the grand alliance against him.

This failing is so truly national in France, that even some of their best and wisest men have been guilty of it on occasions, where the least reflection would have taught them to avoid it as a rock on which their fairest hopes might be wrecked. Witness the no less celebrated than dangerous answer to the Dutch Ministers, by the famous Cardinal Polignac, Minister Plenipotentiary of France at the Treaty

of Utrecht, *nous traiterons chez vous, nous traiterons de vous, & nous traiterons sans vous*; "we shall treat in your own country, we shall treat about you, and we shall treat without you:" words that had like to have cost him and his master, Lewis, very dear from the scandal they gave to the various members of the confederacy. They saw, by the usage the Envoys of Holland met with, what their own would be, if that imperious negotiator (though otherwise an illustrious and respectable character) had found any opportunity to treat them in the same manner.

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## C H A P. LVI.

*On the Slavery of the Press in France.*

**T**O what has been said on the subject of literature, it may be added, that in that branch of ingenuity which has most contributed to the furtherance and diffusion of learning, the art of printing, the

the French are excelled in common both by the Dutch and the English; it is in most parts of France on a very indifferent footing. Excepting what comes from the royal press in the Louvre, and some other capital printing houses, few books are, in general, so remarkable for the neatness of their types, and for other requisites and recommendations, as those printed in Holland or England: defects the more worthy of observation, as in the royal patent that is found at the beginning or end of every book, there is a special clause enjoining very particularly, that care shall be taken that both the print and the paper be good.

This royal patent, which the French call the king's privilege, is a passport, without which no book dares appear in public. It naturally reminds one of its constant companion the licence of publication, which must be obtained previously to the former. This is the great barrier to the communication of thoughts throughout

out France. Whoever is desirous of publishing his writings in a legal manner, must carefully weed them of all such passages as might give offence to people in authority, or strike, however indirectly, at the establishment of things in church or state: otherwise his manuscript, instead of procuring him either honour or profit, would only render him amenable before a very severe tribunal.

They, in whose option it is to grant or to refuse a licence of publication, form a numerous body. They are divided into several classes, every one of which presides over a particular department of science or genius. The proficients herein are consequently obliged to submit their various performances to the revifal of these respective judges. This circumstance invests them with more power than they may seem at first sight to enjoy. Exclusive of those national, avowed tenets, which no one must be allowed to call in question, it is far from improbable that  
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some of these gentlemen may cherish a predilection for others which they are so strongly wedded to, as not to suffer any contradictory opinion to see the light.

It may reasonably be presumed, that many ingenious productions, no ways detrimental to the peace of the world, either in spiritual or temporal matters, have been arbitrarily and unjustifiably suppressed through private prejudice, or merely to preserve an unanimity of sentiments on things perfectly indifferent in their nature, but which either bigotry, or a groundless apprehension of imaginary evils, represented as pregnant with consequences of a fatal tendency.

Neither is it any temerity to suspect that envy or enmity may not unfrequently enter into the motives alleged for putting a negative on the appearance of things of great merit; and that pretexts of irreligion, immorality, or of too much freedom with affairs of state, may be pretended, in order to silence those talents  
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whose superior lustre might eclipse their own.

Hence to obviate the numberless difficulties which tyranny and superstition have combined to throw in the way of liberty of thinking and writing, not a few venture to commit their thoughts to the press under the cover and protection of a false title page, attributing to London, Amsterdam, or any other foreign place, what, in spite of this disguise, is well known to have been printed as well as written at Paris.

Notwithstanding the danger incurred by these practices, the thirst of gain induces many a bookseller to run the risks of the heavy penalties and chastisements he is liable to, in case of a discovery. This, however, seldom happens, from the many precautions taken to prevent such a misfortune.

There is between the booksellers and the printers concerned with them in these hazardous enterprizes, an inviolable spirit of secrecy. In defiance of the indefatiga-  
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ble vigilance of the lieutenant of police, at Paris, voluminous editions are, sometimes, carried on of works, of which the authors and publishers would meet with the most unmerciful treatment, if, unhappily for them, they could be detected. This magistrate officiates in the joint capacity of a Roman censor and a modern inquisitor; and for that purpose is provided with a number of spies, that pretty much resemble the familiars of the inquisition.

There goes a story, that this magistrate, by dint of a diligent and expensive enquiry, discovered a house wherein business of this nature had long been transacted, and where, in particular, a periodical performance was regularly printed, highly offensive to the ruling powers. He hastened thither with the utmost expedition, but the friendly genius of the printer had been there before him. All who acted their parts in this dark scene had been so timely forewarned, and had exerted themselves with so much alertness, that he found, on his arrival, no traces  
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of the intimation he had received, and went away completely disappointed ; not however, without being fully apprized of the inutility of his endless searches, and of the unshaken fidelity of those through whom alone an effectual discovery could be made. No sooner was he returned to his coach, than he found a paquet inclosing a sheet of the work in question, quite fresh and wet from the press, and a scroll, informing him, that his bribes were unavailing, and that the profits of the work enabled the parties interested in it to bribe much higher.

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#### C H A P. LVII.

*On the Motives alledged by the French Government for oppressing the People.—Means employed.—Policy of those who aim at arbitrary Power.*

**S**UCH is the situation of the press in France. They who have the management of things imagine, that it concerns them as much to nip in the very bud



but every project that has a tendency to promote a free exertion of thought, as to discourage any liberty of speech on subjects relating to public affairs.

This conduct they deem the more necessary, as they look on the French nation as the most inclined to unruliness and sedition in their temper of any in Europe, and of a disposition to lose no opportunity of indulging this turn of mind if they could do it with any prospect of safety.

In order, therefore, to preserve tranquillity, they judge it absolutely requisite to fetter and curb, in all possible instances, this native ungovernableness; which, notwithstanding the strictness of government, is, they affirm, apt to break out and manifest itself in spite of all controul.

As proofs of this obstreperous, restive disposition in the natives of France, the frequent tumultuous complaints of the vulgar, on any accidental grievance or calamity, are cited, and the outrageous degree of violence with which they inveigh

weigh against the supposed authors of their sufferings: a violence that would not end in words were they not convinced of the impracticability of proceeding any farther; and that deeds would only serve to aggravate the load their discontent and murmurs represent as intolerable.

To corroborate these allegations against the generality of the French, the licentiousness of individuals is quoted, and the frequent riots and broils among the lower classes, and even the younger sort of the middle and decent stations in life.

Were we to believe the admirers and advocates of the government of France, it is chiefly to prevent these mischiefs that every liberty consistent with public safety and conducive to the quiet of society is allowed the French. This is done with the view of diverting their minds from the pursuit and perpetration of those irregularities that are the usual consequences of too indiscreet a restraint on the passions of mankind. These must necessarily have some vent, and, for want of due objects

to employ them, will of course direct their warmth and impetuosity to less innocent gratifications.

This is the main argument on which is founded the unlimited toleration of all pleasures and diversions of a public nature. These, in France, are permitted at all times and seasons, without dividing, as Shakspeare says, "the Sunday from the week," or rather converting this, of all others, into a day of universal sport and recreation. The worst as well as the best, are particularly reserved for it, in order to render the enjoyment of them the more complete throughout all ranks and degrees.

The celebration of festivals is not more marked by the religious solemnities appropriated to them, than by amusements and pastimes of all denominations. They seem a kind of appendix and expletive to eke out the remainder of a day, which is generally looked upon as designed for merriment, as well as for serious purposes. All this serves to keep the croud  
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in good humour, and to employ the attention of individuals in all stations.

Such are the motives assigned by the French government for its avowed connivance at, or rather encouragement of, that species of revelry and dissipation which fills up the leisure of people, without endangering the public repose. However meritorious such a conduct may appear in itself, they who pursue it, merit no other praise than of acting conformably to the system it is intended to support, that of keeping subjects entirely submissive, and depriving them, by every artifice, of means, and even inclination, to disturb their superiors in the exercise of unbounded, unquestioned authority.

That this is their principal aim, no one can doubt who reflects that, in all ages and countries, they who have aspired at, or possessed, arbitrary sway, have always been remarkably solicitous to provide as amply as possible for the entertainment of people of all conditions: well judging that mankind are never so little attentive



to the pernicious designs of their rulers, as when these are expert in strewing with flowers the road to the precipice they are leading them to.

If we consult the annals of Rome immediately antecedent to the Downfal of the Republic, we shall find the various competitors for power courting the favour of the people through a profusion of shews and spectacles; and a boundless indulgence and condescension to their humours. By these means they drew off their minds from too close an inspection into the measures pursued by the heads of parties. Under pretext of displaying their taste and magnificence, and of recommending themselves to public notice and regard, by acts of munificence and generosity, they had no other aim, in reality, than to over-reach the credulous multitude. In order to debauch their morals, they plunged them into a course of such frivolous occupations, as effectually enervated their intellects, by begetting an indifference for all objects but such as administered

ministered to their passion for pleasure. As this had chiefly caused, so it was the only passion that survived, the extinction of that spirited manly gravity which had characterised them, during the virtuous periods of that famous common-wealth. The loss of it speedily put an end to their liberty, by introducing that levity and relish for trifling amusements which are the general prelude and presage of the ruin of all free States.

As this policy had so completely succeeded in bringing the Romans under subjection, they to whom the reins of tyranny were transmitted, carefully adopted so useful a precedent. In no long space of time, a total change was effected in the character of that people. Before the expiration of the reign of Augustus, they no longer resembled that picture of their ancestors which both their own and other historians have drawn with such honourable colours. Instead of that fortitude and magnanimity by which they maintained independency at home, and became for-

midable to their neighbours, they were grown abject sycophants, and vied in the meanness and servility of their obedience, with the most slavish nations recorded in history. As much as of old they had been renowned for a contempt of effeminacy, and the unremitting practice of the most arduous and self-denying virtues, they were now equally noted for a shameless addiction to all manner of voluptuousness, and for being no less abandoned to the most profligate venality, in order to support that luxurious dissolute course of living, from which, when once addicted to it, men are so seldom reclaimed.

In later ages, the same conduct has never failed to produce the same effects. Constant experience teaches that such as labour to establish despotism seem so well apprized of the utility of such practices, as always to have recourse to them in the execution of their designs.

Without searching for instances abroad, enough may be found among ourselves,

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at no very distant date, that between the Restoration and the Revolution. The many partizans of the Court, and of the measures it was openly and violently pursuing, lost no opportunity of exerting their zeal and activity to precipitate the nation into an oblivion of the imminent danger it was in of losing its liberty for ever. Among other means, they did not forget to introduce new diversions and amusements to the public, and industriously to circulate a taste for pleasure, that effectually contributed to shut people's eyes on the flagitious projects then in being. They were not thoroughly perceived till they were almost accomplished.

Lessons like these cannot too frequently be held up to the recollection of mankind: particularly when a fondness for an unlimited variety of expensive and ostentatious pastimes, renders the reflexions on its consequences especially proper and seasonable.

As to the imputation of an unruly, seditious temper, which the friends and abet-

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tors of arbitrary power in France, are so ready to fix on the character of the natives, it is no more than a pretext which the adherents to tyrannical administrations are always ready to employ in vindication of the oppressive maxims of their patrons. These are too well persuaded, that force alone must prove the foundation of a power, of which they are determined to make an illegal iniquitous use, to trust the people with any means of resistance of which they can find a pretence to deprive them.

Instructed by examples of which, it is hoped, this country will never afford a repetition, while prompted by sentiments of humanity, we compassionate the case of a great and rival nation, worthy most undoubtedly of a better fate: let us, at the same time, remember by what steps it was brought to its present condition; and learn to read in its destiny, those warnings that prudence directs mankind to extract from the errors and misfortunes of others.

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